

*SWEENEY'S
LECTURES
ON THE
COUNCIL.*

J. M. J. A.

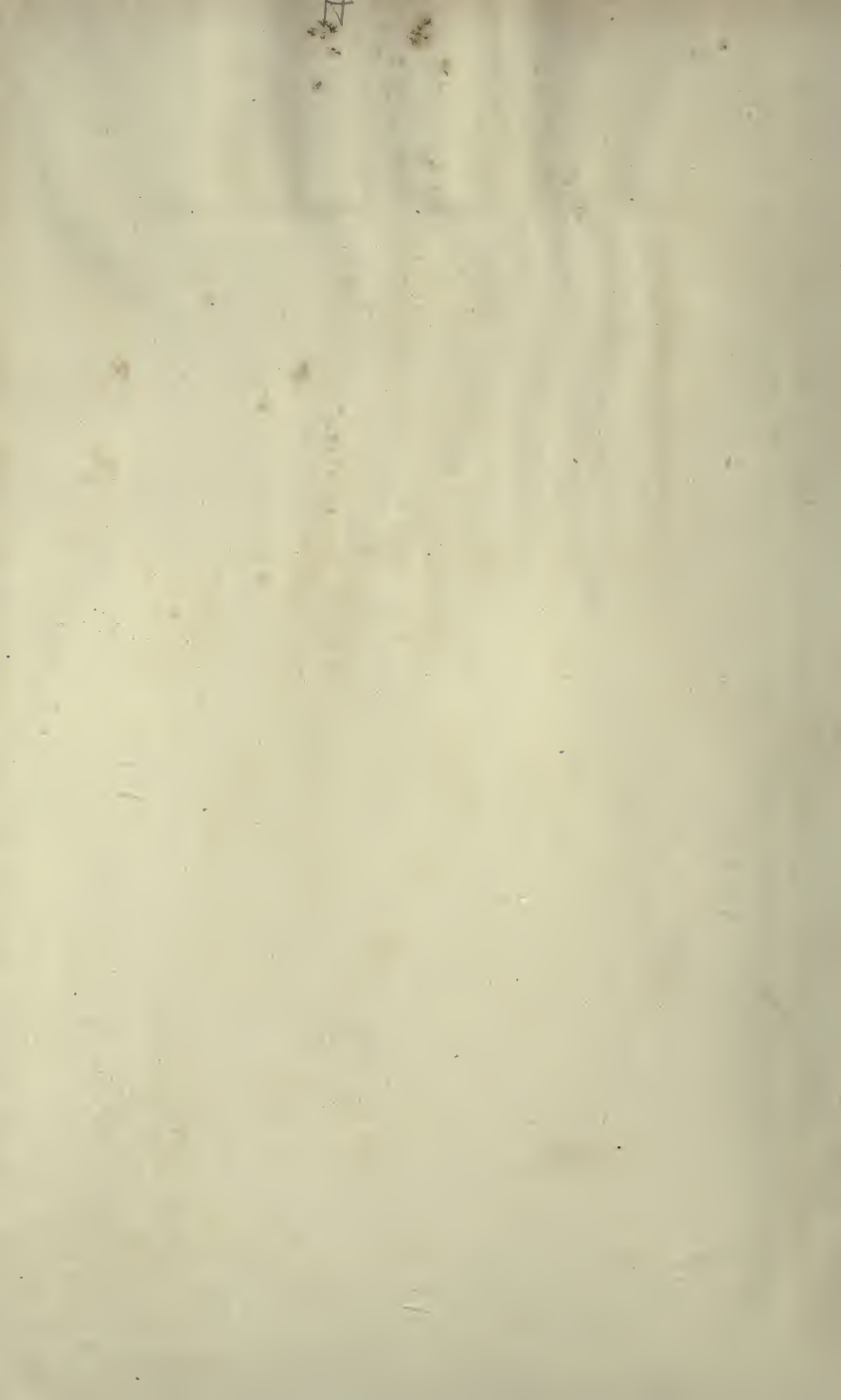
BIBLIOTHECA Congr. SS. Redempt.

Domus ad B. M. V. sub titulo ANNUNTIATIONIS.

BISHOP-ETON.

4 c

24



E 1-80
LECTURES

ON THE

ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL.

THE END

THE END OF THE WORLD

LECTURES

ON THE

ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL,

DELIVERED IN THE

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, BATH.

BY THE

REV. J. N. SWEENEY, O.S.B.

"Whosoever keepeth the faith of the Councils, to him be the peace of God,
through Jesus Christ, His Son."—*S. Gregorius Magnus.*

LONDON :

CATHOLIC PUBLISHING AND BOOKSELLING COMPANY
(LIMITED),

53, NEW BOND STREET, W.

THOMAS BOOKER, MANAGER.

1870.

PREFACE.

I FEEL that I owe no apology for having delivered these Lectures upon the Council, though I do owe an apology for publishing them. Delivering them was a pastoral duty, undertaken in behalf of those to whom they were addressed. Publishing them is something beyond a pastoral duty, and seems to suppose that they can be of further use, than that which is implied in the work which each Priest owes to his own immediate flock. But it has been at the request of those who heard them, that they have assumed a form in which they may be of more lasting service to the people for whom they were prepared, and may perhaps be of interest to others also. The task was undertaken without any intention of publication; and as the Lectures were written out after delivery, and had to be prepared for the press during the very heavy and fatiguing labours associated with the Christmas solemnities, I feel that there is about them an imperfection which would

probably have been less striking, if greater leisure had allowed of a more attentive preparation.

The great fact of the Œcumenical Council of the Vatican has given occasion to many publications, and has formed a special department in theological literature. There are many ways in which the subject may be treated, and has been treated. I have selected what seemed to me the most practical mode of presenting the subject, and the interest with which the Lectures were followed, confirmed me in my opinion that I had not adopted an unpopular course. If it may appear that the Council is only taken as an idea, around which to gather many principles and questions of controversy, it must be admitted that this is the use which has been made of this glorious manifestation of the Catholic Church by those who are opposed to her claims, and that the Council has shown how the Church is sharing with her Divine Founder the fate of being *set up as a sign to be contradicted*. The Council is a challenge, and it has been accepted as such. Because the Church has gathered together her forces in defence of the truth, her enemies have had recourse to all their usual devices, in order to resist and withstand her march towards victory, and have tried to prevent the impression which such a splendid declaration of her

power is calculated to create. It is on the side of the Church against her opponents, that every one of her faithful Children ought to be glad to be arraigned; and all ought to be willing to do what lies in their power to put the Council in its true light in the view of those who are willing to see the truth as it really is.

The Church is a mother to us all. She has claims, most sacred and affectionate, upon our duty and our love. In her days of sorrow, it becomes us to be with her in sympathy, and not to abandon her cause; and in her days of triumph we may claim our share of the joy which attends her victory. A Council is a victory. It is a victory over the world; for every Council has strengthened that Faith by which the world is conquered. As in the older Councils of Nicæa, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, the Church gave a death-blow to heresies against which she then directed her efforts, so, in spite of the confidence which the world assumes in its present attitude against the Church, future historians will, in numbering the triumphs of the Church over the world, record the victory achieved in the Council of the Vatican. May God, in His mercy, grant that many may through its means be brought to the Faith! And may He vouchsafe that our present Holy Father, Pius IX., who, under the in-

spiration of the Holy Ghost, has inaugurated this great work, may live to see its happy and glorious results, which must follow from the deliberations of the Fathers gathered around him, and which must attend upon the prayers *made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him!* Thus was St. Peter liberated by an Angel from the hands of Herod, and spared to preside over the Council of Jerusalem; and thus has his successor been hitherto defended under similar persecution, and has been directed to commence—what we pray he may witness even to its close—the Council of the Vatican!

ST. JOHN'S PRIORY, BATH.

February 4th, 1870.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE	PAGE
I.—Introductory. Definitions	1
II.—The Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.) a Sanction and a Model for future Councils	14
III.—An Œcumenical Council desirable in itself as a test of Orthodoxy	28
IV.—An Œcumenical Council possible in the True Church only	46
V.—What the Œcumenical Councils have done	66
VI.—An Œcumenical Council, the clearest Manifestation of Unity and Catholicity	88
VII.—An Œcumenical Council the loudest protest against Actual Error	107
VIII.—An Œcumenical Council, the Representative of the Gospel against the World	128
IX.—The Eve of the Council. The work of Preparation . . .	150
X.—The Council at work. What the Council is actually doing	174
XI.—The Influence of the Œcumenical Council on the Future .	196
XII.—The Duties of the Council towards us. Our Duties towards the Council	218

THE ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY. DEFINITIONS.

All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.—MATT. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

WHAT a noble and majestic commission is this, given by the Divine Redeemer of the world, when, for the very last time, He called His Apostles together, spoke to them His parting words, gave them universal and supreme authority to teach, confirmed in them the power of the ministry, assured them of His ever-abiding presence amongst them, and then gently raising Himself from the ground, blessed them, and ascended into Heaven! For these were the last words which He ever spoke upon earth; solemn words, as words on such an occasion must have been; words well weighed, as words must be which come from the wisdom of God; words full of power, as those must be which are backed by the Omnipotence of God; and words full of efficacy, as the future has shown and will continue to show for ever.

That meeting upon Mount Olivet on the Day of the Ascension, when these noble words were spoken, formed

what might not unfittingly be called the last Œcumenical Council held by our dear Lord during His visible sojourn upon earth. And it was upon a mountain, apart from all the distractions and vanities which were occupying others, that He called His Apostles together to speak to them upon the Kingdom of God. And what had been to him that Mountain of Olives on which they were then assembled? At its foot lay the Garden of Gethsemani, where He had commenced the martyrdom of His Passion; and at a little distance beneath stood that unfortunate and thoughtless Jerusalem, red with the blood of many martyred prophets, and probably at that moment discussing, with all its pride and self-sufficiency, the failure, as it would call it, of the attempt which had just before been made within its walls, to establish a new Religion, and to found a new Kingdom of God upon earth. Boastingly might the people of Jerusalem point up to Calvary, and show the spot where they considered all those hopes to have been crushed; but they little knew of what was going on meanwhile upon Mount Olivet, where He who had conquered the world by the Cross, was claiming and dividing His spoils, and was sending forth ambassadors to assert His cause in every nation of the earth.

There is a principle, my dear brethren, which it is important to bear in mind at the very commencement of the task upon which we have now entered, and it is this: that the life of Christ is ever and constantly being realized and repeated in His Kingdom upon earth, so that what He did when *He was seen upon earth and conversed with men* (Bar. iii. 38) is being enacted over and over again in the Church. He identifies Himself with His Apostles when He declares that whoever hears or despises them, hears

or despises Himself; and in His very last words which I have cited for you, He declares that He will remain with His Church *all days even to the consummation of the world*. Not only, therefore, does He by this constantly abiding presence minister with the Priesthood, teach with the Doctors, labour with the Apostles and Confessors, suffer with the Martyrs, bless the solitude and add efficacy to the vows and prayers of Virgins and Hermits; but all of these—Priests, Doctors, Apostles, Confessors, Martyrs, Virgins, and Hermits—are but repeating in union with Him what He had first of all done without them, when He comprised the whole Church in His own Person, and was setting the example that what He had first done, His children and followers should do after Him. Whatever privileges and power the Church has, she possesses because He to whom *all power is given in heaven and earth* has given the same to her, and remains with her; whatever trials and persecutions she has to undergo at the hands of the world, these are her portion because He has said: *If the world hate you, know that it hath hated Me before you* (John xv. 18); and again: *If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?* (Luke xxiii, 31.) This manifestation of power on the part of the Church over the world, and of persecution on the part of the world against the Church, is a sign then of truth, in favour of those who profess to follow Christ and to form His kingdom.

Give a religion with which the world sympathises, which gives as a sign of its mission its temporal prosperity, which ministers to human and corporal comforts, which imposes few acts of self-denial, and urges but little of the supernatural in its ministerial dealings; such an

one bears no resemblance to the religion of Him, who was always hated and persecuted by the world, and who left as a heritage to His followers, a share in the same sufferings which He had sanctified by His example. But give a religion which is ever opposed by the world, misunderstood and misrepresented, scoffed at, and held in a mingled feeling of hatred and fear, over which the world pretends to be triumphing, which is accused of falling short of the world's political wisdom, and to be behind the world's progress in civilisation, whose thoughts are not the world's thoughts, and whose ways are not ways of the world—this seems to be very like the religion of those to whom our dear Redeemer once said—*Be not afraid, my little flock, because it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom* (Luke xii. 32), and whom He gathered about Him upon Mount Olivet, whilst others were boasting of their triumph upon Calvary.

But why do I commence with such a thought as this when I am to speak to you on the Œcumenical Council? It is because such a line of thought seems forced upon us by the way in which the world has acted, and is acting in regard to this great manifestation of power on the part of the Catholic Church. What have been, and what are the prophecies of the world in these times concerning the Church? In the month of June, 1867, the Bishops of the Catholic Church assembled in great number from every quarter of the globe in the City of Rome, in order to celebrate with the Holy Father the eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul, an event not forgotten by the Church of Rome at least, though so little heeded elsewhere. When some months before this occasion, the invitation to attend was issued,

the Press in this country ridiculed the idea, and laughed at the boldness or madness of the Pope, who had no certain home of his own, inviting Bishops into a city of which he had a tenure that was worth only a few weeks' purchase. Yet, which was right, the Pope who summoned the meeting, or the Press which ridiculed it? Did not the assembly meet triumphantly, and serve as a proof to all who are not wilfully blind, of the love which binds the Episcopate of the Church to the Chief Pastor? And when, on the occasion of that glorious gathering, the Holy Father announced his intention of summoning an Œcumenical Council, what was again the attitude of the Press, the organ of the world, and one of its great weapons against the Church? Untaught by previous experience, and still shameless under a previous conviction of ignorance and error, it laughed again, and criticised the weak judgment of one who could dare to attempt such an impossibility. And yet, what is the case? We are now close upon the eve of the assembling of the Council; its organisation has been formed; and both sea and land are already busy in conveying to the centre of Christianity, Bishops who are hastening from the furthestmost points of the earth, to obey the call which has reached them. Princes from India, themselves not Christians, are sending the prelates in their dominions, bearing presents to offer to the Great Father, as they call him, and repeating, in some way, the act of the Epiphany, in verifying the prophecy which has declared that all nations shall come and offer their gifts before the Lord. Nor is the world quiet and unobservant, or uninterested about the event. The old Encyclical of 1864 is reprinted in the chief organ of the Press, and is commented upon; diffe-

rent series of articles appear again and again upon a subject about which no one pretends to care, yet about which none can rest. If it is of interest, then, to those out of the Church, much more so must it be to us, to whom everything that regards the Church is of the most sacred and solemn importance; and therefore is it that for your sake I have undertaken the task upon which I am now entering.

What is it, now, that we mean by an Œcumenical Council? Before giving a more strict and formal definition, I may describe it as an assemblage of the prelates of the Church under the Chief Pastor. We find, both in the teaching and the conduct of our dear Lord and His Apostles, many instances of such an assemblage. I will briefly call your attention to some of the occasions on which our Blessed Redeemer gathered about Him His Apostles, and addressed Himself exclusively to them, speaking to them upon His Kingdom, or giving them doctrinal instructions or special jurisdictional power, and thus forming and perfecting them in their ministerial charge. In the tenth chapter of St. Matthew, after the number of the Apostolical College was completed, He calls the twelve together, gives them powers which are to be evidences of their mission, and limits their jurisdiction to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, who were to be the first objects of their pastoral solicitude. In the sixth chapter of St. John, after He had in a larger assembly of followers, promised the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, and the first deniers of that Mystery had abandoned Him, because they would not believe the doctrine of the Real Presence, even when He taught it to them, turning to those who were to be the first Priests and dispensers of this Sacred Mystery,

Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. (John vi. 68, 69.) In the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew, we find the twelve gathered about Him at Cesarea Philippi, and after He has asked them what progress His Gospel was making, and what men thought of Him, He gives St. Peter the occasion of making his noble profession of faith in His Divinity, and rewards him with the promise of the primacy, and of the infallibility which was ever to be his privilege. In Matt. xvii. we find the twelve dwelling together in a kind of synod, with their Head, at Capharnaum. The collectors of the tribute come, and ask Peter whether his Master was going to pay the tax; and then our Lord gives an opportunity to let the world know that Peter was sharing with Him the headship of the Church, when He orders that Apostle to pay the money in their joint names: *Give it to them for Me and thee.* (v. 26.) In Matt. xviii. He has His Apostles about Him, when He promises to them the power of binding and loosing, and foretels the future power of the Councils of the Church, in words which theologians uniformly interpret of such power: *Where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.* (v. 20.) In Matt. xx. He takes the twelve apart, and communicates to them the secret of His future Passion. At His Last Supper, to them alone He gives the privilege of assisting at the institution of the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, when He gives them also the power of offering up the same Sacrifice which He inaugurated at that time. After His resurrection He appears to them when assembled together, and bestows the

power promised before of binding and loosing, when He breathes upon them and says, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained.* (John xx. 23.) Again, He comes, when most of them, but no one else, were present, and after demanding in their presence from St. Peter a triple profession of love, confers upon him the plenitude of supremacy, in the threefold commission to feed His lambs and His sheep. (John xxi.) And, lastly, we refer again to the event with which we started, the last summoning together of the eleven—for one had gone his way—upon Mount Olivet, when He gives that majestic charge which has been acted up to and faithfully obeyed in the Apostolical Church, from the day that it was given even until now.

And in the history of the Apostles, as we read in the book which records their Acts, we find the same assemblages brought together on various occasions. In the first chapter of this book we find the eleven abiding together, in conformity with the instruction given to them, and waiting in prayer for the event which was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. They aggregate others to them for the election of Matthias, when St. Peter, presiding over them, orders the election. We find (Acts v.) the twelve sitting in judgment upon Ananias and Saphira; and in the next chapter, the twelve assembled together and ordering the election of the seven deacons, who, when elected, are brought before them for ordination and authority to act. We find them together when they depute their chief to go with St. John to confirm the converted Samaritans. (Acts viii.) Tradition tells us that it was in a general assembly of the Apostles

that they drew up and promulgated the Creed which goes by their name. But Scripture, beyond the possibility of being mistaken, gives us an account of their holding a Council, when they decided in Jerusalem upon the non-necessity of observing, and imposing upon Gentile converts the ceremonial law of Moses—a most important instance, but one which I need but mention at present, as it will be fully dwelt upon in our next lecture.

In the annals of the Church, too, we find repeated instances of Councils—Œcumenical or less general—accordingly as circumstances arose to demand such assemblages; and such, in one form or another, are ever going on in the Church. Diocesan Synods, or Councils, are the gathering together of the clergy of a diocese under the presidency of the Bishop, the head of the diocese. Provincial Councils are the meeting of the Bishops of a province, under the presidency of the Archbishop or Metropolitan. National Councils are formed by the assembly of the Bishops and Archbishops of a nation under the presidency of the Primate; and General or Œcumenical Councils are formed by the summoning of all the prelates of the Church, under the presidency of the chief pastor, the Pope. The word Œcumenical especially implies all prelates in the *whole habitable globe*. An Œcumenical Council, therefore, means “a legitimate assemblage of Bishops, summoned from the whole habitable globe, convened, presided over, and ratified by the Supreme Pontiff.” With regard to the presidency over such a Council, it belongs by Divine right to the chief pastor, who may exercise this right either in person or by substitute. Not the convocation or the presidency

only, but the final approval of the acts of the Council, belongs to the Pope; and though a Council may be Œcumenical in its commencement and progress, it might not ultimately rank as Œcumenical, if anything occurred to destroy its liberty of action, or if the Sovereign Pontiff refused ultimately to ratify its acts *—just as an Act of Parliament requires the Royal consent before it becomes the law of the land. The nineteenth Council, now summoned to meet in the Vatican in December, is Œcumenical in its convocation: God grant it may continue so through its progress, and be brought to a happy conclusion, for the glory of God and the blessing of the Church!

It is essential also for an Œcumenical Council that all Bishops having jurisdiction be called, and have full liberty of action and discussion. Bishops are declared by the Canon Law of the Church to be, in such a Council, not counsellors of the Pope merely, but judges by Divine right; and at the end of the Council they join in signing the acts and decrees with a defining authority. Hence we see the untruthfulness of the statement repeatedly made, with all that boldness and shameless ignorance about ecclesiastical matters for which our English Press is notorious, that in the future Council the co-operation of the Bishops will be but nominal, and that its decrees are already prepared and determined upon. Who is to deprive the Bishops of their rights and their liberty, and to control their judgment? Can seven or eight hundred

* The "Theologia Wirceburgensis," in its useful Treatise de Conciliis Ecclesiasticis, makes a distinction, not usually observed, between Œcumenical and General Councils, and gives the title of General, but not Œcumenical ("Concilia Generalia non tamen Œcumenica"), to four Councils—viz., Sardica, A.D. 347; Pisa, A.D. 1409; Constance, A.D. 1418; and Basle, A.D. 1443.

men, of that noble and independent spirit which the Catholic Episcopate has manifested in its resistance to worldly aggression, yield to an overbearing spirit, if—what is impossible when the Holy Ghost calls them together and presides over them—any effort were attempted to stifle discussion, and impede the exercise of a right which the Holy Father has shown himself to be foremost in declaring to be Divine, by the very fact of summoning those who have been called to a share in his pastoral solicitude, to weigh accurately with him, and to determine what will contribute most to the glory of God, the integrity of the Faith, and the salvation of souls?

The Council is a great event, and may well demand at our hands all that interest which, as children of the Church, we cannot refuse her. The world is interested in this event—deeply and anxiously interested, although it pretends to conceal its interest under an assumed tone of indifference or ridicule; and we must bestir ourselves now, as the early Christians did in their time of struggle, and offer prayer without ceasing for the Church and her venerable head, that the Spirit of Wisdom may, as ever, guide her in her deliberations, and the Spirit of Fortitude defend her, and grant her victory in her labours against sin and error. There must be a wonderfully attractive power in Rome, and a wonderful susceptibility in the Bishops of the Church, that they should be drawn together into this centre, and leave behind them for a time all those who are dearest to them, because the most immediate objects of their fatherly care. But the Holy Spirit has always manifested an organizing and unitive power of operation, from the day that He moved over the

waters at the first dawn of creation, and from the Great Day of Pentecost, when He strengthened the Apostles, and bound them together in a perfect bond of unity. And it is the same Holy Spirit who will bind together the pastors when gathered under their chief, and will secure them—as He has so faithfully done until now—from every danger of error.

Permit me, my dear Brethren, the expression of one thought which may fill many a heart on the assembling of this great meeting of the Bishops of the Church, and in connexion with it let me take you back to Mount Olivet. When upon the day of the Ascension, the Apostles in obedience to the summons of our Divine Lord assembled upon that mount, there were found but eleven. One was missing, and you know what had become of him. We cannot conceive that upon that day, after the glory of the Resurrection had been manifested, and the admirable Ascension was to take place, anything like a feeling of sadness could come over that Sacred Heart, which at the foot of that mountain had once been broken with sorrow. But we may feel for that absent one, and ask whether he may not have prefigured the absence of churches which have fallen away from unity, when a summons for a general meeting of the Episcopate is issued forth, and they are found wanting, and unable to obey the call. What is England's state in connexion with this fact? For the first time since the days of St. Augustine of Canterbury, the old hierarchy founded by him exists not to receive or obey the summons: its place knows it no more. Even in Trent one representative of that hierarchy was present, the Bishop of St. Asaph's; but now there is not one

remaining. But England will be well and gloriously represented. With its youth renewed like the eagle's, the hierarchy of England, the province of Westminster, will send its members, and amongst them our own beloved Bishop of Clifton.

Hear me, ye poor. I wish you above all to understand me in what I am undertaking to say on a question which you are sure to understand, because it concerns your Church. Before commencing the work on which I have now entered, I hesitated for a time, and asked myself the question: Will the poor understand me? I am speaking to you about the meeting of all the Bishops in Rome, under the headship of the Pope. This is not hard for you to understand, and you can be as much interested in such a glorious cause, as any others of your fellow-Catholics. And all ye faithful, cannot you understand what we are going to devote our attention to for some weeks to come? It is not, and it cannot be an useless undertaking if it will increase your zeal and enlist your fervent wishes and prayers in behalf of what must be most dear to you, as it concerns your Church and the cause of truth and of God. What you are especially asked for, and it is the Father of the faithful that asks you, is sympathy and prayer. And when your own Bishop goes to represent you as his flock, bid him go with your supplications to the throne of God to speed him on. And when he once more comes back amongst you, and will again hold his hands in blessing over you, his return from the holy assembly over which the Holy Spirit will have presided, will bring you a stronger conviction than ever, that you are of the body of Christ, and of the household of the faith.

LECTURE II.

THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM (ACTS XV.) A SANCTION AND A MODEL FOR FUTURE COUNCILS.

The Apostles and Ancients assembled to consider of this matter.—Acts xv. 6.

EVERY portion of Sacred Scripture demands our veneration, and has a claim upon our interest, because it has been inspired by the Holy Ghost, and has been written for our instruction. For this reason, it is difficult to attempt to make a comparison between one part of Scripture and another; and we almost shrink from the attempt, lest in doing so we might appear, in preferring one portion, to be making ourselves judges of the works of God, and to be setting a lower value on what is equally perfect, inasmuch as it comes from the same wisdom, and is placed before us by the same directing hand. And yet, as each book of Scripture has been written for a motive, accordingly as that motive may affect us to a greater or a less degree, we cannot help being accidentally influenced in proportion to that interest. Now, there is one book of the inspired writings, which cannot but affect us with very peculiar interest. The critical period of time which it embraces in its history: the alternations of triumphs and of suffering which are recorded in its pages: the fact of its having been written by one who was also a writer of a gospel, St. Luke the Evangelist of the Infancy of our dear Lord, being also the Evangelist of the Infancy of the Church: the gradual progress which we are able to

trace in it of a cause so dear to us, and of which we ourselves are now a party; all this imparts a charm to the beautiful book of the Acts of the Apostles, which gives it a very special claim to a distinctive love. St. Chrysostom calls the Acts of the Apostles the gospel of the Holy Ghost. For as the four gospels record the acts of our dearest Redeemer, and form the gospel of Jesus Christ, so does this book tell us of the working of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles after He had come down upon them upon the Day of Pentecost, and had then taken up His perpetual abode in the Church which He was to guide and protect for ever.

Let us for a moment throw ourselves into that first age of our Church, and enter as we can into the spirit and feeling of those who shared in her earliest struggles. A work of destruction and of rebuilding was set before them, as it had been set before the prophet Jeremias. *Lo! I have set thee this day over the nations and over kingdoms, to root up and to pull down, and to waste and to destroy, and to build and to plant.* (Jer. i. 10.) The Apostles had to look back upon the past, and forward into the future. They might think of the days of their childhood, and remember their early and dear associations with a system now superseded, and with a temple which had now ceased to be holy; for we can conceive it to be true of them what St. Paul said of his disciple Timothy, that they had known the Scriptures and Jewish observances from their infancy; but observances and ceremonies they had once prized were now to be unheeded, for *the old things had passed away*. They might also think of the days of the visible presence of their Holy Founder amongst them, when His words and acts compensated for everything,

and were a lesson and a security to them. They had seen Him in active labours and deeds of mercy ; they had seen Him in sorrow ; they had seen Him in his later days of triumph. They remembered well, and never could forget His instructions, His corrections, His warnings, and His predictions ; and now that He was gone visibly from among them, all these came before them, and marked out their principles and their line of conduct. And they also looked forward into the future, and knew full well the duties they owed towards those that were to come after them. They were perfectly aware that what ought to be the case would be the case, that every word of theirs would be taken as a rule and a law, and that every act of theirs would be interpreted as a precedent ; as they were under Christ the founders of a system which was to be pursued for ever. What our Lord had said to them, each of them might say to those who were to be their followers : *I have set you an example, that as I have done you should do likewise.* For the Church was ever to be Apostolical.

In their work of destruction and of building up, a great and practical difficulty soon presented itself. How was it to be met ? The universality of their commission was the occasion of this difficulty ; for in this universality consisted one great difference between Judaism and Christianity. You know that Judaism was essentially *national*. The Jews were a separate nation, a select and privileged people ;—well might they say with the Psalmist : *There is no other nation which hath its gods so close to it, as our God is present to all our petitions.* (Deut. iv. 7.) Inter-course with other nations was forbidden to them. And even our dear Lord, in the first commission which He

gave to His Apostles, insisted on their acting upon this prohibition, and limiting their labours to the Jews: *Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* (Matt. x. 5, 6.) And we find St. Paul acting on the same principle; for in Acts xiii. 46, we read the awful words which he addressed to the Jews, who had rejected the grace offered to them by his preaching and ministry: *To you it behoved us first to speak the word of God; but because you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles.* But the last commission: *Go, teach all nations*, implied that a total change was to come over the face of the world. *You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth.* This was breaking in upon an old law and tradition, and the order to go against what had become an old prejudice. They had to preach to the Jews; but what they had to tell them was that the old ceremonial law was done away with, and the new law of liberty from what had become a bondage, was now to be enforced. Baptism in water was to take the place of circumcision in blood.

As long as all the converts were Jews, the difficulty did not present itself, and there was an uniform mode of acting with them. They had been members of the old church and subjects of the Old Law, and now they passed from the shadow to the substance, from the figure to the reality. But a Gentile, and a whole Gentile family, comes to seek admission into the Church. Cornelius the Centurion, *a religious man and fearing God with all his house*, is divinely admonished to go to St. Peter, and seek

for instruction and admission into the Church. And St. Peter is divinely admonished how to act in his regard, not to look upon him as unclean and requiring any legal ceremonies to cleanse him, but at once to baptize him, and raise him to an equality with those who had been Jews first, and had afterwards become Christians (Acts x). For the first time since the days of Abraham, a period of two thousand years, election and salvation are promised and secured independently of circumcision; and the very rite so solemnly enjoined upon that Patriarch, faithfully observed through all the intervening centuries, hallowed by the patronage of our dear Lord Himself, and practised upon the Apostles in their own infancy, is now declared by authority to be unnecessary and to have been superseded. This certainly was a religious revolution, but it was one that had always been intended in the decrees of God; for the Jewish system was only to be for a time, and was to give way to the more perfect system of Christianity. Those Jews who were fully converted, like St. Paul, and who accepted the whole faith, and submitted in all things to the discipline of the Church of Christ, saw no difficulty in breaking off from the old system and thoroughly embracing the new. But there were some that were only half-converted, who, even in the time of the Apostles, gave the trouble which such half-converts have always occasioned; and these, still clinging to old prejudices, and claiming for themselves the right of judging, where they ought to have obeyed with simplicity, interpreting Scripture on their own authority, protested, and insisted that for Gentile converts the only way into the new Church was through the old. *And some, coming down from Judea, taught the brethren: that except you be*

circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved (Acts xv. 1).

Here, then, was a question of two things, about which the Church is always keenly sensitive : it was a question of Faith, and of Discipline. Of Faith, because to deny the sufficiency of Baptism, was to deny the validity of an institution of Christ, to be going against the solemn commission given to the Apostles to teach and baptize, and was gainsaying that declaration, that he who believed and was baptized should be saved ; and of Discipline, which always goes hand-in-hand with Faith, and in which the Church exercises her infallibility, and is anxious for uniformity. And there were two courses open, either of which had to be embraced at the expense of the other. One course was to follow Scripture alone, the other was to submit to the authority of the pastors of the Church. Scripture was very strong in favour of circumcision, and of obedience to the ceremonial law of Moses. Read Genesis xvii., and you will see in what terms Almighty God orders the rite of circumcision, declares (v. 13) that it is to be a *perpetual* covenant, and that whatever male child is not submitted to that rite, his soul shall be destroyed out of his people. And remember, moreover, that tradition was in its favour. It had a prescription of two thousand years, and therefore Circumcision had been established then for a longer period than Baptism has been even now. Nor was there anything in Scripture which clearly did away with the obligation of this rite. Of course the noble epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, in which the works of the law are declared to be superseded, had not yet been inspired and written ; nor were the Gospels even at that time a part of the

Bible. The Scripture position, therefore, was very strong, and the authority of the pastors of the Church was but of short-standing in those days. It was Divinely instituted, certainly; but one mark of its Divine sanction, which it possesses now, long-standing in spite of all opposition, and success in its exercise, it had not yet been able to acquire. Which of the two courses did the Apostles pursue? Did they cling to the letter of Scripture, and allow others to follow their own interpretation of it, or did they insist upon obedience to the teaching authority? We shall see what they did.

Now we come to Acts xv., and to the application of the text which I placed before you at the commencement. When those who came down from Judea into Antioch, where St. Paul, with St. Barnabas, was preaching at the time, insisted upon the necessity of circumcision on the part of Gentile converts, the two Apostles contested with them; but, being unable to convince them, they determined to start off to Jerusalem, and to consult the other Apostles and the elders on the question. *And the Apostles and the ancients assembled together to consider of this matter.* They assemble as men with judicial authority, determined to close a matter of controversy, and to decide upon a question of discipline, which really involved an article of Faith. What a venerable assembly was that, and how important, both on account of the members who composed it, and of the act which they were going to determine upon! Already the number of the original twelve was again diminished; not now by an act of apostacy, but martyrdom had begun to do its work amongst them. *Herod the king had stretched forth his hand to afflict some of the Church; and he had*

killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. (Acts xii.) And those who were present might show signs of their sufferings also. The venerable St. Peter might have shown the marks of the chains wherewith he had been recently bound, when he had been imprisoned by that same Herod, but, through the prayers which had been made for him without ceasing by the Church, had been miraculously rescued by an angel. (Acts xii.) And the zealous St. Paul, who had been changed from a persecutor into an Apostle, who had already begun his career of gaining whole cities to the Faith, breaks in upon his labours, and leaves them for a time in order to pay, after an interval of fourteen years (Gal. ii. 1), this important visit to Jerusalem, and to meet in Council many of the Apostles whom he had not yet seen since his conversion. And what he did, the other Apostles in like manner did, and leaving for a time the scene of their preaching, they came together to consider upon the practical question which had been opened for discussion.

What takes place in every Council takes place now. The matter is fully discussed. We can imagine Ebion and Cerinthus, who, according to St. Epiphanius, were the leaders of the disaffected party, arguing their point from Scripture, with all the earnestness and subtlety which the enemies of the Church employ in their endeavours to prove their own point against the authority constituted by God. And from the words of the sacred text, *when there had been much disputing*, it seems probable that the orthodox side were equally earnest and determined to defend the cause committed to them. When every opportunity had been given of debating the matter, Peter rises up and decides the question. He had

heard both sides, and he was now to speak judicially and definitively. In his own case, as we have seen in his dealing with Cornelius, he had obeyed the Divine injunction given to him, and had not done what these objectors from Judea were insisting upon. And now he cites his own conduct, and states that as he had been chosen to preach to the Gentiles, had been the means of spreading the Faith amongst them, and had, in admitting them into the Church, followed the example and influence of the Holy Ghost, who had come down upon convert Gentiles as well as Jews, and had made no difference between them, he declared it to be unjust and a tempting of God, to impose upon others a yoke and an obligation which they themselves found to be now intolerable. It was the Grace of Jesus Christ, and the means of infusing that Grace, that was to save them, and not now the law of Moses. And behold what follows when this venerable voice was heard, and the judge had spoken: *And all the multitude held their peace.* The *much disputing* is all over. The decision has been pronounced, and the question is closed for ever. Upon this question the whole multitude still holds its peace, and bows in submission. Paul and Barnabas entertain the Council with an account of their labours, and edify and cheer them by telling of the wonders done among the Gentiles, on whom those proud Jews had been looking down. And in conclusion, St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, who, though the Council was held in his own diocese, had acknowledged in the Assembly of Apostles and Elders the privilege of presidency to St. Peter, seconds the words of the Primate, quotes the testimony of the prophet Amos as confirmatory of the judgment which had been given, and proposes that

an encyclical letter, embodying this judgment, should be sent round to the Churches, declaring what *hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us*. The letter is accepted by the Churches with joy and consolation (v. 31), and the discipline is everywhere followed.

Such, then, is the Council of Jerusalem. Its testimony is decretorial, and of immense value; and it is well referred to as a sanction and a model for every future Council. How can any one, who looks on the Apostles as founders of the Church under Christ, and who believes that the Church is Apostolical, doubt its value? The Council is a *sanction* for all that have followed. For if the Church were asked on what grounds she claims to enforce her authority in her General Councils, she points to the Council of Jerusalem, and shows her grounds there; for she is Apostolical, and claims a right to exercise powers which were bestowed upon the Apostles and were exercised by them; and her office is perpetual and universal. The commission given to the Apostles to go and teach all nations, is a part of her commission, and she is ever exercising it. And when, by the power that is in her, she brings together men from every nation in the habitable globe—and when these, drawn together and sitting in deliberation, discuss and decide upon questions of faith and discipline, send out their decrees, and state what seems good to the Holy Ghost and themselves, they are only doing what the Church of the Apostles did, and what that very same Church—as it is still the Church of the Apostles—has equal power to do even now. Look to the decrees of Œcumenical Councils which have been held in various years of the annals of the Church, and you will see how they have always acted

on the same principle, and have exercised an authority equal to that of the Council of Jerusalem. When, in Nicæa, some three hundred years later, Arius renewed the heresy of Ebion and Cerinthus, and denied the Divinity of God the Son, the Redeemer of the world, the Bishops and elders assembled in the first Œcumenical Council after the Apostolic age, to consider upon this question, and under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit, sent forth against that impious heresy those decrees of anathema, which seemed good to the Holy Ghost and themselves. When, a century later still, the Patriarch Nestorius denied to the Blessed Virgin Mary the title of Mother of God, the Bishops and elders assembled in the glorious Council of Ephesus—the third Œcumenical Council—and in like manner anathematized that heresy, declaring what seemed good to the Holy Ghost and themselves. When, in the ninth century, another Patriarch—Photius—denied the Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son as well as from the Father, the Holy Spirit, whose own cause was so closely at stake, drew the Bishops and elders together in the fourth Council of Constantinople—the eighth Œcumenical Council—and again declared what seemed good to the Holy Ghost and themselves. And when, in later times, in the sixteenth century, Faith, Discipline, and Morals were assailed by self-constituted reformers, who rejected that obedience to authority which is the stay and safeguard of society as well as of the Church, and who, by their principles and their example, opened the door to all the evils which have followed since their time, the Bishops and elders assembled in Trent to consider upon these questions; and in that eighteenth Œcumenical

Council—the last which has as yet been held—condemned, in words inspired equally by the Holy Ghost, doctrines and principles contrary to faith and morality.

And now, in this nineteenth century of ours, when licence is becoming bolder than ever, and the very well-being and safety of society are threatened by that disobedient and revolutionary spirit which prevails so generally throughout the world, the Church steps forward, as she has done before, and becomes the saviour of society. The Father of the faithful calls the Bishops and elders together, to consider upon great and important questions, and under the guidance of Him who influenced the deliberations at Jerusalem, at Nicæa, Ephesus, and elsewhere, will declare boldly to the world what will seem good to the Holy Ghost and themselves. And if the Church be asked what authority she can have, thus to call together the prelates dispersed throughout the world, and how she can dare to pronounce judgment upon the world, she can answer: “I am the same who have for eighteen centuries been defending the cause of truth and justice, who have been founded by Him who came into the world to give testimony of the truth, who have received the legacy to continue ever doing what He did, and who have been assured by a promise, which cannot fail in its fulfilment, that He and His Holy Spirit are with me for ever. I am the same who sat in Jerusalem, who issued forth a decree which seemed good to the Holy Ghost and myself, and am ready to do the same even in these days of little faith.” A bold assertion, it may seem; but yet made without hesitation, and, as the future will prove, blessed in its results, because it is made for the cause of God.

And the Council of Jerusalem is a *model* also for every future Œcumenical Council. Bishops and elders are assembled together by a competent authority. For a time they leave their ordinary sphere of labour, and come, as St. Paul and St. Barnabas did, from active and zealous solicitude, to join with their brethren in bringing wisdom, piety, learning, and experience to bear upon the questions proposed for deliberation. As St. Peter presided at Jerusalem, his successor, either in person or by delegates, presides by Divine right over an Œcumenical Council. There is first of all, after prayer and invocation of the Holy Spirit, full and free discussion. The matter is then closed by the voice of the President, and then all hold their peace. There is such a dead and solemn silence in the Church, such a perpetual silence in regard to what has once been decided in a Council, that the matter is never opened again; and a whisper of disaffection would so disturb the silence, as to reverberate throughout the whole Church, and excite a shudder of abhorrence in every Catholic heart. The decrees are then formally drawn up, signed by the Prelates, and sent round in the form of an Encyclical to the whole world. Everywhere they are accepted and obeyed with joy and consolation by the children of the Church, and the work of the Council is thus happily crowned.

Let me beg of you to read for yourselves in Acts xv. this history of the Council of the Apostles, and you will see how the first founders of Christianity established the precedent, which has been followed in after-times by the Catholic Church. You will be led to praise and to thank God, for having in His wisdom and His goodness, instituted such a mode of defining and promulgating the

truth, and like the crowd which once witnessed a miracle of our Blessed Lord's, you will *glorify God who hath given such power unto men*. And whilst the Holy Father and the Bishops imitate so faithfully the example of St. Peter and the Apostles, and assemble together to consider upon matters which so deeply concern us, it is for us to be ready to accept with joy and consolation the message in which they will communicate to us, with their blessing, what will have seemed good to the Holy Ghost and themselves. Authority on the part of the Pastors, and obedience on the part of the people, must ever be linked together. Their union was shown in the time of the Apostles: it is a union blessed by God, and in His Church it is destined to last for ever.

LECTURE III.

AN ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL DESIRABLE IN ITSELF AS A TEST OF ORTHODOXY.

Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch, as being to render an account of your souls.—HEB. xiii. 17.

THERE is a wholesome and a genuine sound about these words, which must gain a welcome for them into every Christian soul. Independently of their being inspired words, they are words of such practical good sense, and express a principle of such constant and universal application, that they must be accepted by all who have a love for peace and truth. They express also that affectionate bond, which, in the mind of our dear Lord, the Founder of the Church, was ever to link together pastors and people in His kingdom upon earth. For He has given to His Church the features and qualities of a family, in which the children are happy and confident and free from care, because those, whom Providence has placed over them, bear all the solicitude, and in return for a confident and submissive obedience, extend an efficacious and protecting care. When the prophet Isaias foretold of the future Redeemer, he described the affectionate bond which would for ever attach Him to His people. *He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather together the lambs with His arms, and shall take them up in His bosom, and He Himself shall carry them that are with young.* (Isa. xi. 11.) You know (and who does not know it ?) how this was verified in His own case, and with

what good reason He called Himself the Good Shepherd. And as a founder would always wish to infuse his own spirit into the work which he leaves behind him, the commission which our dear Saviour gives to the chief of His followers, tells what spirit He wished to leave when He says to him: *Feed my lambs ; Feed my sheep.* And to His Apostles He says, *Fear not, my little flock.* Well, therefore, might the Apostles at the very outset, put forth positively and insist upon the principle of subjection and obedience, and say in one voice with St. Paul: *Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch, as being to render an account of your souls.*

We have seen what was done in the Council of Jerusalem, when a doubtful and difficult case arose. Our text was fully and practically verified. The first prelates of the Church, sensitively aware of their responsibility, in their vigilance over those for whose souls they knew that they had to render an account, and fully aware at the same time that their decision would meet with a quick and entire acceptance by those that were subject to them, assembled together, weighed the question judicially, and pronounced authoritatively a decree that became law and was cheerfully obeyed. Doubtful cases may arise at any time; and error may array itself in such an outward garb as to be mistaken for truth, by those who have not the power of discriminating for themselves. As the evil spirit may present himself under the appearance of an angel of light, error may sometimes assume the form of truth, and it will require a means and a test beyond the reach of the individual, to ascertain the reality. Is it not desirable, therefore, that such a means and test should be accessible in a matter of so great importance ?

One thing is quite certain ; and however much we may differ on other questions, on this one thing we must be all agreed, for we cannot differ upon it, and that is, that differences do exist. And as we look into the nature and character of these differences, we cannot help agreeing further in this, that the differences are great, real, and fearful in their consequences. The melancholy utterance of St. Paul is constantly being verified : *There must be heresies.* (1 Cor. xi. 19.) And if heresy is inconsistent with faith, and faith essential to salvation, it must be of importance to every one who values salvation, to have a means of determining between two opposing doctrines, which is of faith, and therefore pleasing to God, and which is heresy, and therefore hateful to Him.

We maintain that those separated from us, fall short—very short—of what, in matters of belief and practice, is requisite for salvation. Mind, I say nothing of individuals, I am speaking of the system. Take the Sacraments alone, and see how notable and how fatal is the difference. Five out of the seven are denied ; and from this denial and difference between us, can we say that no important result follows ? Here, at the present moment, we are assembled in the presence of the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, and as soon as I shall have ceased speaking to you, a striking difference will be manifested between us who believe, and those who seem unwilling to believe, that our dear Lord meant what He said, when he promised that He would leave us Himself under the form of bread, and when He fulfilled this promise at the last supper. His words are : *The bread that I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world* (John vi. 52) ; and, again : *This is My Body.* We believe these

words, and, therefore, when we proceed to the beautiful rite of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, hundreds of us will bow down in loving adoration before this wonderful Mystery; others will gaze in ignorant astonishment at what will be to them perfectly unintelligible. Yet the Blessed Sacrament has been now upon earth for eighteen hundred years, and there are those who profess faith in Christianity, and know no more of this great reality, than the very pagans who persecuted our ancestors in the first days of the Church. Can this be a matter of indifference, or a question of theory only, when our blessed Lord makes the very salvation of our soul turn upon our practical acceptance of this article of our faith? Life or death is the alternative. *He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever*, is the blessing of life upon those who believe and adore. *Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you.* This is His own judgment upon those, who will not believe what He has so solemnly and so lovingly declared.

And another practical difference of vital importance exists with reference to that other Sacrament promised by our dear Lord, when to the Apostles He said: *Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in Heaven* (Matt. xviii. 18); and which Sacrament He instituted, when, on the day of His resurrection, He breathed upon His Apostles, and said to them: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain they are retained.* (John xx. 22, 23.) Here again we maintain that our dear Lord meant what He said, and that He really and indeed did leave in the Church with His pastors, that power which

the Apostles' Creed calls "the forgiveness of sins." We maintain that this Sacrament of Penance is of Divine institution, is one of the Sacraments of the Gospel, is the normal means for obtaining pardon, and recovering the Grace of God when it has been lost, after Baptism, by wilful sin; and therefore that they who reject it are rejecting a special means instituted for their own sanctification, and are as decidedly and presumptuously opposing our Blessed Redeemer, as the Pharisees did when they asked scornfully: *How can this man forgive sins?* and when they found fault with Him because He exercised the office of the Good Shepherd, in seeking for lost sheep, and fulfilled the express mission for which He had come, which was to call sinners to repentance. Yet both in doctrine and in practice, this Sacrament and saving institution is denied and resisted.

Take a third Sacrament, a wonderful proof of the merciful character of our Lord, and of the help He has left in His Church for the salvation of those souls for which He shed His Precious Blood. It is a Sacrament which concerns not so much the living as the dying; a Sacrament promised and prefigured, and afterwards instituted and used, as we are assured in Sacred Scriptures. It is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction—the last anointing of a dying Christian. This Sacrament is prefigured, in those ministerial acts exercised by the Apostles in their visitation of the sick, during the lifetime of our blessed Redeemer, when He was instructing and preparing them for future Sacramental duties. For so we read in St. Mark: *They anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them* (vi. 13). Of the fact of the Sacrament having been instituted, we have very expres-

sive evidence in the well-known words of St. James, one of the eleven, to whom was given the commission : *Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* Faithful to his commission, and not overstretching his apostolical power, as presuming to teach anything else except what had been commanded, he gives the order : *Is any man sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil.* (James v. 14.) Is this command to be obeyed, or is it not ? And is there not here a difference of the most fearful moment, between us who observe the order, and those who never, never practise it, but allow poor, helpless, dying Christians to go out of the world unanointed and unaided by the very special means instituted expressly for them ? We, at least, cannot look upon this as a matter of small consequence, or as a question merely of theory and indifference, when there are at stake great realities which intimately affect the salvation of souls.

And if, on the other hand, we are accused, as we undoubtedly are, of adding in these and other articles of our faith to the revelations of God, and to the primitive doctrine of the Church, we are quite prepared to do again what has been done in times without number, to demonstrate that these, and all other doctrines at issue between us, are clearly contained in Sacred Scripture, have been handed down to us by faithful witnesses, and therefore must be believed and practised. But if Scripture be not enough to decide the dispute (and it cannot be so if both of us maintain it to be upon our side), we ought to have some other authority to appeal to, and some test by which to determine between truth and error. I

have shown that Scripture does, if its sacred words have any meaning, teach the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist, the forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament of Penance, and the duty of anointing the dying Christian. But if such clear declarations of Scripture are not enough, then we invoke some other tribunal, and we maintain that such an one as is afforded by an Ecumenical Council is most desirable, and ought to be welcomed by all who are really anxious to ascertain the truth. Is Christianity thus to be torn asunder, and can it supply no remedy or protection against the wounds with which it is threatened? If such were the state, our lamentation might well be like that of the Prophet Jeremias: *For the affliction of the daughter of my people I am afflicted, and made sorrowful: astonishment hath taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Galaad? or is there no physician there? Why then is not the wound of the daughter of my people closed?* (Jer. viii. 21.) I invoke some other tribunal in our own name and for our own sake; for it is not in accordance with our feelings to be anathematized, as we are, by our neighbours, as if we had gone beyond the commands and wishes of God. I invoke it for the sake of those who differ from us; for we cannot bear to see souls that we love to be wandering from the truth, and to be lost because there is none to reach to them a helping hand, and to rescue them from ruin: so many, indeed, in our own country, that we are inclined to cry out with Elias, that we are left almost alone in our fidelity to God. I invoke it in the name of our good God Himself; for it is His cause that is in question, and His souls that are at stake. I invoke it in the name of the Most Precious Blood which was shed for those souls, and to which it ought to be applied through

the means instituted by Him, who so generously shed it in such abundant profusion for the salvation of the world. I invoke it for the honour of the Adorable Sacrament, which is profaned by those who remain in ignorance of Its reality, until a voice be raised which can sound with sufficient loudness, to bring into subjection those who are as yet too deaf to hear voices which are already summoning them to submission, to faith, and to adoration.

And so we again ask: Is Christianity left unprovided with a means of deciding, which we find to exist elsewhere? Is the Church of Christ, founded by our dearest Lord, and washed in His Precious Blood, less perfect than every other institution which exists upon earth? In human establishments there are tribunals formed by the aggregate of high judges and decisive authorities, whose utterances are decretorial, and from which there is no further appeal. The instinct of mankind declares the same, when it proclaims that "The voice of the people is the voice of God." We find the same also to have been divinely affirmed in the Old Law, when Almighty God commanded, even under the penalty of death, submission to the judgment pronounced by the highest judges, in matters of dispute or controversy between the children of Israel (Deut. xvii.), to which tribunal our dear Lord alludes when He tells the multitudes of their duty of obeying those who sat on the chair of Moses. (Matt. xxiii. 3.) And if there be not an equivalent obligation in the Christian Law, what can be the meaning of St. Paul, when he orders obedience and subjection to the Prelates who watch over us, and who have to render an account of our souls? Is Christianity less perfect, and less able to apply a remedy to existing wants, than

human institutions, or the Old Law which was only a figure of better things to come?

That there is always existing in the Church, even independently of Œcumenical Councils, a judicial power of pronouncing in matters of controversy, is, of course, in the Catholic system, beyond dispute. But as those who differ from us refuse submission to the decrees of the Church, we ask them whether it is not desirable that there should be some such test of Orthodoxy provided in matters of such vital importance as is afforded in less important instances. We put the case first only hypothetically. Suppose that, by some power or other, all the best and wisest men from every nation in the world; men who, by purity of life, previous training, and well-earned experience, could show a claim to respect and confidence—suppose that such men, uninfluenced by national prejudices, because gathered from all nations, could be brought together, and, under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit, were to weigh maturely the questions submitted to them, and then decide—and decide unanimously—what the judgment should be, would it not be unreasonable to withstand such a judgment, and to pretend that one's own private opinion were preferable? If our dear Lord has promised His Apostles, that when two or three of them were gathered together in His name, He would be in the midst of them (Matt. xviii. 20), what will be the case when two or three hundred, as at Nicæa, or five or six hundred, as at Chalcedon, or seven or eight hundred, as probably will be the case in the forthcoming Council, assemble in His name for His cause, and to decide on matters which concern His glory and that of His Church? And when to this supposition we add

another—that these who assemble are Prelates, whom we are bound to obey; who have responsibility over us, and therefore watch, in order to be ready to give an account of our souls, does it not imply a more imperative duty upon our part to acquiesce in their decision, and to fear resistance to them, as to an ordinance of God?

But let us leave the sphere of hypothesis, and come and consider what was done by our ancestors, when circumstances arose which made such a tribunal as we have imagined, to be a reality, with power to judge decisively in a matter in which such a judgment was called for. In our last lecture I told you of the Council of Jerusalem, and described to you how, in a question of practical importance, the decision was safely arrived at in a meeting such as we have imagined, when the Apostles and elders assembled to consider upon the question which had arisen, and pronounced the judgment which seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to themselves. As Ebion and Cerinthus arose to disturb the peace of the earliest days of Christianity, so, in the beginning of the fourth century, arose one who, in the earliest days of the external peace of the Church, brought in discord, and denied the very central truth of the Christian religion. Arius, a deacon of the Church of Alexandria, was bold and blasphemous enough to assert that our dearest Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was merely a creature, and was not God equal to the Father, and of one substance with Him. What a shudder does not the mention of such a blasphemy at once create amongst us, who glory in the profession of our belief in the Divinity of Him, to whom we owe all our peace in this world, and our prospect of happiness in the next! And an equal shudder did its

utterance create in the days in which that heresiarch dared to declare his error. It was instantly anathematized by the orthodox people who heard it; but as the crafty disputant had, by subtle arguments and other unworthy means, gained over a considerable number of adherents, and not a few bishops even had become attached to his party, it was necessary that the voice of the Church should proclaim loudly what was her orthodox teaching, and by the mouths of many witnesses condemn the rising heresy. Through the help and encouragement of the Emperor Constantine, bishops from various quarters of the globe assembled together, and formed the first Œcumenical Council of Nicæa.

It was in the year of our Lord 325. There came together three hundred and eighteen bishops, mostly from the East, as that part of the world was chiefly interested in the controversy; but several attended from the West also, to join with their brethren in the Episcopate, in condemning a blasphemy which created horror wherever it had been heard of. St. Sylvester was at that time Pope, and being unable through age and infirmity, as some of the old historians tell us, to attend and preside in person, according to the right, admitted even at that time, of his office to preside at a General Council, he sent three legates to act in his name, a Spanish bishop and two Italian priests. We may well imagine the feeling which must have filled the hearts of those who attended at this, the first such gathering as had until that time been possible. For those were the first days of the external peace of the Church, when the world no longer persecuted it, or at least, no longer in the same form which persecution had assumed until then. And as we represented to ourselves

the gathering of the Apostles in Jerusalem, when the hand of the torturer had begun to leave marks on those, who went away rejoicing when they were able at the public tribunals to suffer reproach for the Name of Jesus, so now we find coming together venerable confessors bearing the marks which no lapse of time was ever to obliterate, of wounds endured for the glory of Him, whose Divinity had been assailed, and which they were eager to defend. There were to be seen St. Potamon, bishop of Heraclea, who had been blinded and lamed in the recent persecution of Diocletian; St. Paphnutius, of Upper Thebais, also blinded; and St. Paul, of Neocesarea, who had been branded with hot irons on account of his zealous defence of the Faith. These had come, all their infirmities notwithstanding, from Africa and distant parts of Asia, to assert a truth in favour of which they had shown their sincerity by their long suffering. When the Council assembled and the proceedings commenced, Arius was asked to state his doctrine regarding the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; and when he shamelessly declared his heretical assertions, that He was but a creature, was not God, was not equal to nor of one substance with the Father, the astonished and indignant Prelates first of all stopped their ears on hearing such unheard of blasphemies, and wished at once to condemn him by acclamation. But as they had assembled to act judicially, and to investigate the question fully, they did not act with any appearance of precipitation, but patiently heard arguments and explanations; and it was after sitting at various intervals for two months, that at last the false doctrine was fully and solemnly condemned, and against the Arian heresy were inserted in the Creed, as a more explicit and unmistakable

declaration of the faith of the Church, those details not before formally announced in dogmatic words in the profession of faith, though believed and maintained from the beginning, which form one of the differences between the expression of the Apostles' and the Nicene Creed. From that time until now, has been sung forth by the Catholic Church, what she will sing till the end of time, that Jesus Christ is not simply Son of God, as the Apostles' Creed announces, but that He is "Born of the Father before all ages : God of God : Light of Light : True God of True God : begotten not made : of one Substance with the Father : by Whom all things were made."

A test of Orthodoxy was wanted, and it was supplied. It was not Scripture, simply, that was appealed to, although the noble Gospel of St. John, written expressly against a similar error, was decisive upon the point. But something more was wanted. It was wanted to know what the Catholic Church, dispersed throughout the whole world, held upon the point; and the voice of the whole Church was certainly heard clearly and distinctly enough in behalf of this central truth of Christianity. And what we maintain is, that if there are differences between ourselves and others—and would to God there were none! in such a case, if ordinary modes do not suffice to decide on which side is error and on which side truth, a general assembly of the Prelates of the whole Church might, with all confidence, be welcomed as affording a solution to doubts and difficulties, as able to affirm what is to be held as true and to be rejected as false. That which is so desirable is also possible; and what was done in earlier days can still be done, and is going to be done. As there was a woe upon Arius because he still

remained obstinate, notwithstanding his condemnation by the Universal Church, surely there must be a woe upon those who will reject a judgment equally solemn with that of Nicæa, because pronounced by the same authority and under the same penalties. And the desirableness of such a test can easily be shown by the admissions made, and the professions accepted and published by the Established Church in this kingdom, that Church which so widely, painfully, yet practically differs from us, in those solemn matters to which allusion has already been made. The 35th of the 39 Articles declares that "The Second Book of Homilies doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine;" and this Second Book of Homilies says of the first Six General Councils, that they "were allowed and received of all men."* And it also declares of the Primitive Church, during the period of those Councils, that it "is especially to be followed as most uncorrupt and pure."† For thus we argue: The Church of Christ, during the period in which its doctrine was most uncorrupt and pure, deemed it an expedient and desirable mode of preserving Orthodoxy, and of separating what was false from her communion, to hold General Councils; and those Councils were of such authority that they were accepted and universally approved of. But the Church of Christ was Apostolical then, and is Apostolical now, for the Church of Christ always is the Church of the Apostles. And, therefore, she is not overstretching her powers, but is imitating a worthy example, if in order to preserve her Orthodoxy and to drive off error, she does now what was done in days of primitive purity of doctrine, and done for the very

* 2nd Book of Homilies, 2nd Homily, part 2nd.

† Homily on Fasting, 1st part.

purpose of preserving that purity. In the Primitive Church there was a power of convening these tests of Orthodoxy, and men acknowledged that power and submitted to the decisions which it secured. A Church which does the very same now, which has that power, which exercises it, which is recognised by the whole world in that exercise, is certainly not unlike the Primitive Church, and may well be trusted as a guardian and defender of Orthodoxy.

So great, indeed, is the influence of a judgment pronounced by the universal Church, even less solemnly than in one of its Œcumenical Councils, that the argument grounded upon it, urged in the fifth century by St. Augustine, has in our own days served to bring into submission to the Church, one of the greatest among the converts, whom, by the grace of God, these later times have been so fertile in producing. Every age is the age of converts, for the Church is always plying her *warfare*, which is to bring into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. x. 5.) But in our own country, there has been within the experience of every one of us, an influx which has told upon our numbers and position in a very notable manner, so that it is impossible, perhaps, for any Priest to stand, as I am standing now, in the presence of a large congregation, without his eye resting, wherever it may fall, upon the converts who surround him. Foremost, nearly, amongst those who have come over to us from amongst the Anglican clergy, is one of the greatest intellects that the University of Oxford has ever produced, either in former times or in the present age. Many of you may remember the sympathy elicited in his regard, and the indignation

against his calumniator, when the pen of a traducer dared to accuse him of insincerity, and of encouraging principles adverse to truthfulness. It was a happy fault, however, on the part of the false accuser, as it served as an occasion for bringing before the public the history of a life well worth studying, and the working of a noble mind in its search after truth. Just as St. Augustine, at the time of the mental struggle which preceded his conversion, was led to read the last argument which gained him to Christ, by a voice calling out to him: "Tolle, Lege" (Take up, and read); so did the same Providence which had evoked that voice, direct the hand of this good father of the Church, for such he now is, to read an argument of that same St. Augustine, in which he urges with his immense power the force of the consent of the Universal Church against his Donatist opponents. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*. (The entire world judges with security.) These words seemed to act upon him as a spell, and struck him with a power which he had never felt from any words before. They kept ringing in his ears, and gave him no rest till, through them, he made the resolution of taking that step of submission to the Church, which brought perfect peace to a soul till then so filled with anxiety.* Depend upon it, when the whole world will again speak, and with that solemnity which will be attached to its utterance when given forth in a General Council, its judgment will be perfectly secure, and must be followed by all who will hear it. I can imagine well that the instance which I have cited for you, will one day be brought up in judgment against those who still dare to delay in spite of such an example,

* Newman's "Apologia," p. 211.

and are deaf even when the Universal Church calls out to them. God grant it may be followed by numbers greater than have yet been influenced by it, and that it may not be at a future day a reason for condemnation against many, who can scarcely plead ignorance of their duty when so strikingly brought before them !

Here, then, is our argument, and who can stay its force ? The voice of Nature, the universal cry of mankind, the principle of human laws, the prescription of ages, the desire for peace and unity, and the struggle against the anxiety and torture of religious doubt, — all these conspire together in invoking a judgment, which can inspire confidence and gain obedience, and which can show itself to be in very truth the judgment of God, because it is pronounced by those whom He commands us to obey, as being placed between ourselves and Him by His own appointment. And when that venerable assembly is drawn together, who will be able to resist its influence ? Surely there can no longer exist that ignorance, which charity so often urges as a plea on behalf of those who perhaps may not have had the means of surmounting it. Surely there can no longer be darkness, when men ought by the brightness afforded to them, to be even dazzled into submission. Can ignorance and darkness be considered invincible, when Almighty God Himself appoints such a special and practical means for dispelling both ?

What a fearful judgment must await those who will still hold out against such an argument ! When Almighty God will say to them : I gave you a Church to guide you, and I gave it Marks by which you could not help telling it was My own Church. I gave you Prelates to watch

over you, upon whom I placed the responsibility of your soul; but I wished you on that very account to obey them, and to be subject to them. When the teaching of the Church, dispersed throughout the world, but yet one, because still under its one Pastor, was not enough to convince you of your duty of submission, I repeated for you the Day of Pentecost, and brought together into one place, devout men and men of authority from every nation under the sun, to convince you by their Unity, and yet you withstood even such an evidence

Oh, my dear brethren, God is a God of mercy, and it is not for us to pronounce judgment in His Name. But He is also the God of Truth, and we must not attribute to Him a love of error. May His Mercy and Truth once more meet together in behalf of souls redeemed by the Precious Blood of His Only Son! May they be brought from ignorance into the knowledge of the Truth, and ever show within the Church that obedience which is the true source of peace here, and a safe pledge of happiness hereafter!

LECTURE IV.

AN ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL POSSIBLE IN THE TRUE CHURCH ONLY.

In the last days the mountain of the House of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say: Come, let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

—ISAIAH ii. 2, 3, 4.

THE truth which I shall have to demonstrate this evening is closely connected with that to which we devoted our attention on Sunday last; and I must, in order that you may see the train of reasoning on which I have now entered, show you the connexion between them. The proposition which is to engage us this evening is this:—An Œcumenical Council is possible in the true Church only. Our last Sunday's proposition was:—An Œcumenical Council is in itself desirable as a Test of Orthodoxy. If our last proposition is true, our present one bears its own truth about it, and there cannot be required much effort to bring it home to the minds of all. If a General Council is desirable in itself, as I have proved, and if it is possible in the true Church only, as I hope to prove, a point of very great importance is secured for us, by the admission of the excellence of that Church, which, in her office of guardian of the Faith, has such means of preserving truth, and of bringing it home to the minds of men. Starting with the principle enforced by St. Paul, that it is the duty

of all who profess to be Christians, to obey their Prelates, and to be subject to them, who have to render an account of their souls, we saw that a test of orthodoxy, which is so loudly called for, is supplied. When called for elsewhere it is to be found. Nature and human law and the Old Law supplied it, Was it to be found wanting only in the true Church, the most perfect and sacred of all institutions existing upon earth? We saw that such a test was wanted and was most loudly called for, because there do exist most fatal differences between ourselves and those separated from us, though we both bring Scripture to our aid, to maintain the position which we defend. I limited myself in these differences, which might be multiplied so as to become tedious to listen to, to the practical question of the Sacraments, and I showed how in three of them, namely, the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, the salutary Sacrament of Penance, and the Sacrament, especially instituted for the aid and comfort of the dying, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction—differences which cry for a solution, do exist; and where is the solution to be found, except in some authoritative judgment, such as can be pronounced in an assemblage like an Œcumenical Council? The Church dispersed throughout the world can, indeed, pronounce such a judgment, but it might not so easily be accepted, as when the judgment is forced upon us in a concentrated form, when the Prelates who are to answer for our souls, gather themselves together, and in the most solemn and imposing manner declare what seems good to the Holy Ghost and themselves. We saw, too, how such judgments had been pronounced and had been submitted to in the earliest times, and how

by them, as in the Council of Nicæa, orthodoxy had been defended and error had been conquered. The Church of England, in its authorized dogmatical declarations, as in that which in its Thirty-nine Articles, it makes in favour of the Book of Homilies, admits the value of such decisions as tests of orthodoxy; and so we concluded, as reason forced us to conclude, that what the Church was at one time able to do, she is still able to do, unless Christ's promises and intentions have failed, and unless the Church, founded upon a rock, has fallen to ruin, and the gates of hell have, in spite of every security afforded by our Lord, prevailed against her, and God Himself has been conquered by the Spirit of Evil.

Observe now the immense importance of this conclusion, and see what we have gained. In the Church of the Apostles, and in the Primitive Church, that was done which ought to serve as a precedent for future times, inasmuch as the Church is always the same. Give a Church which, in its defence of truth, and in driving away error, does the very same as was done in those earlier times, and for the very same purpose, under the very same circumstances, and by virtue of the very same promises, whose theory and whose practice are the very same as have existed from the beginning, and you have an evidence in favour of such a Church, and a safe criterion by which to guide your judgment. But give one which has lost the power possessed by the Apostolical and Primitive Church, which cannot call together a tribunal competent to pronounce in cases which must, and will, and do arise, and it bears upon itself a mark that distinguishes it from the Church founded by Christ, and by Him invested with gifts which were intended to be per-

petual. Such a Church is not His. And we need not wait for the conclusion, or even the actual gathering of the Council, to show the difference between a Church which has the power, and one which has it not. The Council, even as it is at present, in a state of preparation and of possibility, is enough to mark the distinction. The fact of summoning a Council is a challenge; it is a throwing down the gauntlet; let who will, accept it, and come and measure strength with the Catholic Church! Let any other Church—I do not say succeed in calling a council, and in bringing it into existence—let it attempt to do such a thing. It is not usual to call spirits from the deep, when they will not come for the calling.

In order to introduce to you the subject of this evening's lecture, I have brought before you the words of the Prophet Isaias, in which the glory of the Church of the New Testament is celebrated. And first of all one word upon the great prophet, whose testimony is so important, whom Almighty God allowed, some eight hundred years before the coming of our Lord, to see and to write down the events of His Life and His Kingdom. So clearly does he announce some of these details, that St. Jerome does not hesitate to call him an Evangelist; and this idea is encouraged by the Church, when she orders the Priest at Mass, and the Deacon before chanting the Gospel, to pray that as Almighty God cleansed the lips of Isaias with a burning coal, so would He vouchsafe to cleanse the heart and lips of one who is about to announce the good tidings of the Gospel. He foretels the Birth from a Virgin Mother, the Adoration of the Magi, the Flight into Egypt, the character of the teaching of our Lord, and His office of a Good

Shepherd: he tells of His miracles, the details and bitterness of His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, and His future judgment. Often does our dear Lord quote him in reference to Himself; and therefore such an authority must be of great weight, when it brings before us what was to be the case in the days which now have dawned upon us. *In the last days, he says, the mountain of the House of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it; and many people shall go and say: come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.* How literally are these words verified at all times by the visibility and universality of the Catholic Church, the Church of all nations, but especially by the General Council now about to assemble in the city of Rome, in the Vatican Basilica! *The last days* are what the prophet calls the days after the coming of Christ, the days of the Christian Church. *The mountain of the House of the Lord on the top of the mountains*, describes strikingly that noble Church of St. Peter, on the Vatican Mountain, itself a mountain of a house, in its colossal size and majestic proportions, standing aloft as if crowning the city beneath, as we are told by those who have had the happiness of visiting the Sacred City of Rome,* the Sion and Jerusalem of the

* Gibbon calls St. Peter's "The most glorious structure that ever has been applied to the use of religion." And Byron thus addresses it:—

"But thou, of temples old and altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee,
Worthiest of God, the Holy and the True."

—Childe Harold.

New Law. And the House of God is *prepared*; it is ready to receive its God, when in the meeting of the Prelates of the Church, He Himself, the Holy Spirit, the Spouse of the Church, will come and fill it with His presence, and preside over those who are assembled under His Headship. So St. John saw the new Jerusalem "*prepared*" *as a spouse to meet her husband*. And we find, even now, in the preparations for the Council, all nations flowing in. For all Bishops are repairing thither, and the Bishop represents his nation, the Church of his nation; as St. Cyprian says: "The Church is in the Bishop, and the Bishop in the Church."* And two things particularly does a Council attend to, doctrine and discipline. Doctrine is represented by the *law of the Lord*, and discipline by the *ways of the Lord*. And thus a description of an Œcumenical Council is in great and practical detail drawn out for us in the words of the Evangelical Prophet.

When we maintain that none but the Orthodox Church can realize such a desirable idea as an Œcumenical Council, many reasons at once come to hand in support of our proposition. It is only into the one house of the Lord, visible and raised above all others, that all nations flow. With good reason we may urge the truth of the saying of our dear Lord to His Apostles: *Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I, in the midst of them*. (Matt. xviii. 20.) The blessing of drawing together is ever allied in Scripture with truth: the curse of dispersing is ever associated with error. Those are His sheep which are formed into one flock, and gathered into one fold; but those that are scattered without a shepherd, and exposed to the ravening of wolves, are

* St. Cyprian, lit. lxvi.

none of His. And the very word and meaning of "communion" implies the same, being a fellowship and a holding of intercourse between those who are, by its means, connected with each other. So great importance do the great defenders of the Unity of the Church, SS. Cyprian, Optatus, and Augustine, attach to the visible bond of communion, that they apply it as a test of truth; and they conspire in affirming the principle, that intercommunion between various Churches, and communion with the central Church, are exclusive signs of Orthodoxy. Those are orthodox, and those only are orthodox, who are thus united in holy fellowship together. These two realities of intercommunion, and communion with the central Church, are most manifestly shown in that gathering together into one place, and under one presidency, of the Bishops of various nations, which forms a general Council.

The Roman Catholic Church (to use the name by which our Communion is oftentimes styled) can, both in theory and in fact, call an Œcumenical Council. It can do it in theory. For the theory which it puts boldly forward at all times, with all the eloquence and truthfulness of Isaias, is that it is the Church of all nations. There is some such Church upon earth, and there can be but one such, and the Church in communion with Rome, is the only one which claims to be that of which the Prophet foretold. This Church maintains its own infallibility, and proves it by those promises which Christ made to it, which are still good and faithful, and must continue good and faithful for ever. In this Church is ever kept up the strict duty of obedience and subjection to Prelates, and the submission of these Prelates themselves to the one

Chief Pastor appointed by Christ as His Vicar upon earth. This Church, therefore, maintains that it is one and the same as the Church founded by Christ, that it has precisely the same organization; for as under Him all the faithful were united under one Head, and with that one Head the Apostles were combined together in government, so is it now. The faithful are under the Prelates, who are kept in unity by their communion with the same Head and centre. And this Church maintains, moreover, that it is visible, and perpetually visible. It is not a secret society. In its profession of Faith, in its form of government, in its outward worship and Sacraments, and in the reality of intercommunion, it shows itself, and it has its marks whereby it can be known and distinguished. This is the theory of the Church: these are its principles, of which it never is ashamed, and which it proclaims loudly and fearlessly in the face of the world. The Church, therefore, says what our dear Lord Himself said: *I have spoken openly to the world, . . . and in secret I have said nothing.* (John xviii. 20.) With such an authority, if error has to be condemned, the Church can and does condemn it; and can gather its Prelates together to consider upon the matter, and to issue whatever conclusion it promulgates under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, which presides over it, and over it alone.

And, in fact, the Church of Rome alone has called, and does call, Œcumenical Councils. It has done it eighteen times since the days of the Apostles, and is doing it now the nineteenth time, in the nineteenth century. The presiding Pastor of the Church, the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, sends forth his mandate. He summons, he does

not apologetically advise, the Bishops of the world to come to meet him in solemn conclave; but he orders them, and by virtue of holy obedience, to leave their flocks for a time, in order that with him they may, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, deliberate upon matters of the highest importance for the spiritual good of the faithful, and decree such things as the Holy Spirit will dictate. It is a fact, however much disloyal or unbelieving persons may attempt to distort the evidence afforded by the history of past Councils, that there is not a record of any Council claiming to be Œcumenical, or admitted to be so, which has not attained its title of Œcumenicity by the sanction of Rome. And if we leave the past out of the question—though in the course of our instructions we shall constantly allude to it—what does the present reality attest? Here, in the nineteenth century, in the presence and under the eyes of the whole world, there is a fact of an Œcumenical Council being summoned, and in process of being realized. In point of numbers, and in point of distance and diversity of place from which the Bishops will come, no Council which has preceded it will, in every probability, come near to it. A feeble old man, to speak humanly, with seventy-six years of life, and twenty-three years of a most anxious pontificate pressing upon him, sends out an order signed by the words, “I, Pius, Bishop of the Catholic Church,” and instantly, as if electrified, every Bishop, of whatever nation—even from the antipodes, for the first time—is influenced, and yields cheerfully and instinctively, and the great event becomes a reality. Pentecost comes again, and devout men of every nation under the sun are found together in the Jerusalem of the New Church;

and the law will come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

No other Church can do more, when it attempts anything of the kind, than bring together Bishops of a nation. However numerous they may happen to be, they will always be found to be nothing more than representatives of a limited place. St. Optatus and St. Augustine taunted the Donatists with the fact, that though in North Africa their numbers were great, and they could form large assemblages, they were not known anywhere else in the world, and shared not that prophetic declaration in favour of the Church: *I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* (Ps. ii.) Indeed, as an Œcumenical Council is a protest against error, none but the true Church could wish to face such a reality, for any other could only meet with its own condemnation. Let any other attempt it, and how could it take even the preliminary steps of summoning such a Council? Who would dare to assert the possession of authority over all nations, as their plea for calling upon the Bishops of all nations, to show their obedience, and repair at a fixed time to the place of meeting? What a contrast to an Œcumenical Council was that extraordinary exhibition of disunion and inactivity, afforded by the meeting of English Bishops in September, 1867, called the Pan-Anglican Synod. Its very name is uncatholic, and sounds like Judaism; it is merely national; for although the prefix Pan implies universality, the epithet Anglican expresses, clearly enough, nothing but nationalism. A hesitating and compromising invitation, not an authoritative and positive summons, is the note which is to call them together, and when the trumpet

gives such an uncertain sound, no wonder that so few prepare themselves for the battle. The second Archbishop in England refuses to attend, and several Bishops in the kingdom do the same. And though the dominions of England are so vast, that the sun never sets upon them, only seventy, from all the world, can be brought together. And when it was brought together, what was its result? Its acts may be summed up into three. One is negative, one is positive, and the third is a work of supererogation. Its negative act was, that it did not attempt to close a single one of those practical and painful controversies in reference to doctrine and discipline, for which the Anglican Church is so notorious. Its positive act was, that it had recourse to the usual cheap means of purchasing a little popularity, and turning away contempt for itself, by an attack upon the Church of Rome, which it charged with three errors which have never existed. And its work of supererogation was, that it had its pastoral letter translated into Greek, and sent to the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, and has never yet received an answer.

And now that we look back again upon the history of that attempt of the English Church to do the work of a Council, does it not seem that we are awakening a ghost that has long since been laid, and to be calling back to memory an almost forgotten story of the distant past? Yet, scarcely two years have elapsed since it was held in the mighty English capital, and who thinks of it now? Who ever quotes its authority as having defined anything, or given encouragement to a stricter observance of discipline and morality? Where are its acts enregistered? In what collection of Councils shall we read its laws and decrees?

Look at the Council of Trent—now, after three centuries, as fresh and vigorous in its enactments as if it were sitting as yet, and meeting, throughout the whole world, with a cheerful observance of its solemn and practical decrees. Look at Nicæa—now, after fifteen centuries, swaying the whole world, which everywhere chants, in universal chorus, its never-dying *Credo*. These last, because they are the work of God; but the poor, human, national Pan-Anglican Synod is born and buried almost in the same day.

Moreover, my dear brethren, to go a little more closely and practically into the question, how far it would be possible for the English Church to realize such a desirable test of orthodoxy as an Œcumenical Council, let us analyse the Church of England into the two greater divisions of which it consists. Take the Low Church and the High Church; for that these two parties do exist in the English Church, is as true as that there are two distinct political parties in the English Parliament. The Low Church party puts prominently forward the right of private judgment, and denounces everything like dogmatic teaching by a living authority. How are such principles possibly consistent with a belief in the authority of an Œcumenical Council, and of an obligation of submitting to its judgment? And the High Church party, even in its most advanced state, makes such a reality as a Council equally impossible, and for two reasons. First, they maintain the existence of only an invisible Communion between the various branches which, they say, constitute the Catholic Church. An Œcumenical Council is the very contradiction of such a theory; for such a Council is the most striking and dazzling manifestation of the

Church as having an outward, visible, organized, bodily existence, and seems to say, to the believers in such a figment as a merely invisible intercommunion between Churches, what our dear Lord said to His Apostles after His resurrection: *Handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have.* (Luke xxiv. 39.) And, again, the advanced High Church party make an Ecumenical Council an impossibility, from the total absence of all deference upon their part to those very Prelates who ought to be its members. For it is a notorious fact, that is thrusting itself on the notice of all observers every day, that though those good and earnest men who are anxious, as they themselves declare, to exalt the character of the English Church, do express great deference for those whom they now love to call their Priests, they are the most out-spoken in opposition to their Bishops. Their acknowledged organs of the Press are over and over again attacking and criticising their Prelates; and the golden law of St. Paul, on which we have already dwelt, *Obeys your Prelates and be subject to them*, is by them far "more honoured in the breach than in the observance." Who clamours more loudly than they in the case now exciting some interest, of the Bishop designate of Exeter? He is accused by them of heresy, and other kindred faults; and the whole of the bench of Bishops that will hold communion with him are involved in the same condemnation. Yet those who thus protest, remain, and will remain in outward and visible fellowship with this and the other Bishops. Why, my dear brethren, SS. Optatus, Cyprian, and Augustine would rather their right hand should be withered, and their tongues cleave to their jaws, than remain in com-

munion with those whom they declared to be heretics. Their definition of a Church, uniformly and constantly is, "a people united with the Bishop." With such feelings, how can an Œcumenical Council be possible, and how can the voices of the Bishops be taken as the voice of God? And, therefore, with either High Church or Low Church, a Council is with them an impossibility.

But what have I gained by proving this? I have gained this, which is so important to our question, that that Church which in this country is most opposed to us, cannot show that it possesses a power exercised in the Primitive Church over and over again, and a power which can call forth a test of Orthodoxy so desirable as an Œcumenical Council. The Church of Rome can do, and is doing, what was done in the good olden days of primitive truth, and is doing it for the same purpose—namely, for the defence of truth and the confutation of error. It is to the true Church alone that is committed the guardianship of truth and the deposit of Faith. A Church which cannot, when circumstances demand it, upraise its voice and proclaim aloud, so as to be heard by all nations, what is to be followed and what avoided, is not the Church of all nations, and is not, therefore, the true Church which Christ made to be that of all nations. We have a right, then, to challenge those who deny our claims and assert their own, to prove their position or to disprove ours, by any of those texts on which we have grounded our instructions as far as we have hitherto gone. Let them show, that they can go and teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. Let them show, that when weighty matters and practical questions call for a judicial decision, they

have power to call together Prelates and elders to consider and pronounce upon them. Let them show that they obey their Prelates and are subject to them, and that they admit the right of these Prelates to watch over them, as being to give an account of their souls. Let them show that the noble prophecy of Isaias, regarding the Church, is fulfilled in their instance, and that they can point to all nations flowing to their Church, in order to hear the law and the word of the Lord. And when they can do this, they will be able to put forward a motive of credibility which, as yet, they do not possess, and will be establishing some claim to be looked upon as the true Church of Christ. That the Church of Rome can answer all these requirements, she shows by one fact, and that is the fact of an Œcumenical Council.

One strange phantom we should imagine the Council ought to dissipate for ever; and that is the question of the validity of Anglican ordinations. Seven hundred anointed Prelates, with the oil of their consecration glistening upon their heads, whose *God hath anointed them with the oil of gladness above their fellows*, might well, even in passive silence, bid defiance to the approach of those unanointed ones, for whom a share in the sacerdotal principedom of the Church is so unmeaningly claimed. Among the parables of our dear Lord there is one which might, without any forced interpretation, apply its moral to such claimants: it is the parable of the ten virgins. Why were the five foolish ones rejected? **THEY HAD NO OIL.** You know how oil is always praised in Sacred Scriptures, and how Almighty God has exalted it as a Sacramental sign of joy, of richness, of light, of strength, of activity, and of beauty. More than that, He has made

it the symbol of the investing with wisdom and authority, those whom He has raised to privileged superiority above others. Kings, and Priests, and Prophets were anointed, and thus promoted to the dignity and the exercise of their respective offices. You remember how Samuel when he anointed Saul King of Israel, took the *vessel of oil and poured it upon his head, and said: Behold, the Lord hath anointed thee to be prince* (1 Kings x. 1); and how upon the death of Saul, David in his lamentations calls down a curse upon the mountains of Gelboe, which had witnessed his death, *as though he had not been anointed with oil.* (2 Kings i. 21.) And you read how when Moses, by the order of God, ordained Aaron to the Priesthood, he anointed him, and how the fact is celebrated by the Psalmist in words used by the Church in the consecration of a Bishop, when it speaks of the *ointment which ran down upon the beard of Aaron.* (Ps. cxxxii.) And again, when Elias was come near to the end of his career, the Lord said to him; “Thou shalt anoint Eliseus to be prophet in thy name.” (3 Kings xix. 16.) And so the fact of anointing, or being anointed, is perpetuated and sanctified by the name of Christ, taken by Him who came to fulfil the triple office of King, Priest and Prophet; and the very name of Christian implies that anointing should not be excluded from the ministerial acts of the Church of the New Law. We find (Mark vi. 13) the use of oil by the Apostles in their administration among the sick, ordered to be perpetuated by St. James. (Chap. v.) And so in the Sacraments of the Catholic Church we find so frequently the use of oil. Baptism is, therefore, called Christening, because in its solemn administration oil is used: so, also, is it used in Confirmation, and in

Holy Orders, and in Extreme Unction. It is used in the consecration of a Church, too, and is seen to be in perpetual use in its sweet privilege of burning before the Blessed Sacrament.

Yet, in the Anglican Church, however high its position and party, oil is still unused. Bishops, unanointed themselves, do not anoint the priesthood; and the priests unanointed, leave children, and those in later development, and those at the hour of death, unanointed also. No oil is used at Baptism, though it is still called Christening: none in Confirmation; and the poor, helpless, dying may call in vain for unanointed priests to come and *anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord*, and prepare them to enter into the home of their eternity. It is quite known that Archbishop Parker, the father of the Protestant Hierarchy, was the first unanointed prelate who filled the see of Canterbury, for he used to boast that forms and ceremonies which had been used in the consecration of his predecessors had had no existence in his case.* And Bishop Barlow, his supposed consecrator, in words which brought censure upon him by better-minded persons at the time that they were uttered, expressed his disbelief in the necessity of any ordination whatever.† So that precedents of nearly a thousand

* "Indeed, the Archbishop took a pleasure," says Strype, the panegyrist of Parker, "sometimes to recollect how he was consecrated, and that he was the first of all Archbishops of Canterbury that came into that see without any spot or stain of Popish superstitions and vain ceremonies required of all before him; without any bull of approbation from the Pope of Rome," &c. (Life of Parker, vol. i., p. 122.)

† Barlow, in a sermon before Henry VIII., had said: "That if the King's grace, being supreme head of the Church of England, did choose, denominate, and elect any layman (being learned) to be a Bishop, that he, so chosen (without mention made of any orders), should be as good a Bishop as he is, or the

years had been departed from, and have never since been observed by those unanointed ones, who pretend to be successors of St. Augustine, St. Elphege, St. Anselm, St. Thomas, St. Edmund, and other illustrious saints of the Church of Canterbury. How, therefore, I ask, could they pretend to the honour of ranking themselves among the seven or eight hundred truly consecrated Bishops, who, by the holy unction of the Priesthood in its plenitude, will gather together in the solemn Council of the Vatican. Let me exhort you to read a case not at all inappropriate, which you will find in the second chapter of 1 Esdras. There we see how, after the seventy years' captivity, when the children of Israel returned to Jerusalem, the roll was read over of those that had been carried away and now came back to their home. And of some who claimed to be of the Priesthood, it is said (v. 62): *These sought the writing of their genealogy, and found it not; and they were cast out of the Priesthood.* In the gathering of the Bishops of the world in the forthcoming Council, each Bishop will have to show the writing of his genealogy, and prove his consecration. The consequences of a doubtful consecration and ordination are too awful to be allowed to exist; and it is not the voice of the Church only, but the voice of those whose interests are at stake in such a question; which ought to call out, that such as are unable to establish

best in England." (Collier, vol. ii., p. 135.) Such was also Cranmer's doctrine. Of course, I do not mean, by what I have stated about Holy Unction, that it is essential matter for Holy Orders; but my argument is, that those who have, in such a point, broken off from the constant practice of the Church, are not likely to have been particular about other points. Would a legal document, drawn up by those who studiously avoided and hated technical law terms, be likely to hold good in a contested case?

their claim to so high and holy an office, should forfeit their claim, and be cast out of the Priesthood. It is cruel and unjust to the souls of the people, to keep them in suspense on such a matter, and to pretend that those ministrations are valid, which are rejected by the Universal Church; and it is unwise and uncharitable to their own souls, for people to cling to a hope of a future recognition of what has been unrecognized for many generations. This is certainly an important evidence against the claims of those who pretend to be on a level with the Episcopate, which will assemble at the General Council. Remember, all you whom it concerns, remember the moral of the parable of the virgins. Whilst the foolish ones were unprepared for want of oil, the Bridegroom came, and the wise with their provision of oil entered the marriage feast; and whilst the others were seeking for what they wanted, the door was closed. And on their afterwards trying to gain an entrance, they heard the awful words of rejection: I know you not. The same words may be one day said to you, if you still reject the immense weight of evidence now brought before you. Do not delay: *you know not the day nor the hour.*

Here then is the end. There is wanting upon earth some such test of Orthodoxy as an Œcumenical Council; for the differences which exist on the most important and awful questions, call for a decision which such a reality can pronounce. From the very nature of a General Council, none can bring such a desirable reality into existence, except that Church which claims to be the Church of all nations. Such a Church is evidently the true Christian Church. Prophecy, its institution,

its early working, the voice of early Councils, and the testimony of early centuries, when all admit that doctrine was pure and incorrupt, all these combine in investing it with the character which it claims, and which we feel it ought to have. A national Church and an Œcumenical Council are inconsistent with each other: an Universal Church and an Œcumenical Council are harmonious terms. Only one Church upon earth claims to be the Church of the universe, and can prove its claim. It is a fact, made all the clearer by the very opposition that is made to that claim. Such a Church has the power of aggregating; every other scatters. *He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth*, is a sacred saying true of the Church, as it was true of Him who formed the Church. There is, then, a choice before you between a curse and a blessing. The curse is to be scattered like a flock without its pastor. The blessing is that which is expressed by St. Peter: *You were as sheep going astray, but you are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your-souls.* (1 Peter ii. 25.)

LECTURE V.

WHAT THE ŒCUMENICAL COUNCILS HAVE DONE.

Remember the days of old; think upon every generation. Ask thy father, and he will declare to thee, thy elders, and they will tell thee.—DEUT. xxxii. 7.

IN the important subject upon which we have now fairly entered, we are this evening to take a very decisive step forward. We are not to deal with theory, as we have had to do so much in our two last lectures, but we now come to most solid matters of fact. We have seen that an Œcumenical Council is, in itself, desirable as a test of Orthodoxy; and we have seen, again, that such a desirable reality is to be found in the true Church only. I have now to open to you some of the annals of the past, and to show you what Œcumenical Councils have done, and how, in reality, they have been, what we feel they ought to be, a means for ascertaining on what side was truth, and on what side error. And in bringing before you the consideration of the great work that has been done in the past, by those majestic assemblies which the Holy Spirit has from time to time drawn together and presided over in His office of Guide and Protector of the Church, I feel that we may conceive our Holy Mother, the Church, to be addressing us in the words of the great lawgiver of Israel, and bidding us, in a grateful and reverential spirit, to remember the days of old, and to think upon every generation that has gone before us.

The words which I have brought before you formed a portion of the last song of that venerable Patriarch. He was now a hundred and twenty years old, close upon his death, and had already appointed Josue to be his successor, in leading the children of Israel into the land which he had seen from a distance, but into which he was not to enter. He recounts the blessings of Almighty God towards His chosen people; and if they wished to have a proof of those blessings, he refers them to the tradition of the past, and to the testimony of their ancestors. *Ask thy father, and he will declare to thee, thy elders, and they will tell thee.*

The Church, too, has her tradition, and is able to point to a long line of those to whom has been committed, in every generation, the guardianship of the Faith. Venerable now for her long existence upon earth, yet fresh and vigorous as in the first days of her foundation, she is able to recount her struggles and victories, and to show the mode of defence she has pursued whenever an attack has been made on the deposit committed to her custody, and when the gates of Hell have vainly tried to prevail against her. Ever on the watch and prepared, she has at all times, even in her dispersed state, a sufficient guarantee for her safety; yet, in order the more strikingly to silence her enemies, and to pass on to future generations in a more solemn form the record of her victories, she draws together at times her forces, and acts with a more concentrated power upon those who dare to oppose her. This is what she has done in the various Œcumenical Councils.

Since the Council of Jerusalem held in the Apostolic Age, eighteen such Councils have been celebrated by the

Church. There has thus been the average of one to a century; and now, in this nineteenth century, the nineteenth Œcumenical Council is being gathered together. Sometimes, accordingly as circumstances have required them, they have followed more quickly upon each other. Three were held in the twelfth, and three in the thirteenth century. Sometimes the interval has been long: three centuries intervened between the Apostolical Council and the first Œcumenical Council of Nicæa; nearly three centuries again intervened between the last of Constantinople and the first of the Lateran; and now three centuries more have elapsed between the last Œcumenical Council—that of Trent—and the Council of the Vatican which is now in course of preparation.

During the first three centuries of the Christian era, it was the will of Providence that the Church should be doing its work—effectually, indeed, but secretly. The Church, like its Founder, was to have its hidden life, from which it was afterwards to emerge when the fulness of time appointed in the decrees of Almighty God arrived. The character of this period is strongly marked, and differs from the periods which were to succeed it. It is peculiarly the age of martyrs—not that any age in the Church is, or has been, without martyrs; but the Christians during this hidden time were all living the lives or dying the deaths of martyrs. Like the lion of which the Prophet Ezechiël speaks (c. xix.), which went about in his ravaging, *and learnt how to make widows*, the enemies of the Church ravaged also, and learnt how to make martyrs. The period is divided into the Ten Persecutions—the first under Nero, in which was accomplished the glorious martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul; and

the last under Diocletian, which proved how Catholic the Church had become, as it witnessed heroes of the Faith in almost every quarter of the globe, some of whom we have already alluded to when speaking of the first Council of Nicæa, and including in that glorious "white-robed army" our own proto-martyr St. Alban. This age is bounded by the Cross. At its commencement we see the Cross upon Calvary, an object of ignominy to the world, a scandal and a stumbling block to both Jews and Gentiles. It ceases, indeed, to be an object of sight; but it is an object of faith, and affords fertile matter for the preaching of the pastors, and for the quiet meditation of the children of the Church. At the close of this hidden period it shows itself again. It comes forth from its hiding-place, appears in splendour to Constantine, and conquers him to Christianity, at the same time that it enables him to conquer all the enemies that oppose him; and is afterwards, through the pious activity of his mother, St. Helen, our own countrywoman, dug out from the place where we might imagine that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had tenderly laid it, to be kept until happier times, and is by her enshrined and secured as the most sacred of relics. During this time, indeed, there were heresies; for there has been no exception in any period of the Church to that saying of St. Paul's, *There must also be heresies*. But about these heresies there was a secrecy which did not require more than the local opposition that was made to them. And these heresies were just of the nature that we might expect. Some Jews and heathens, in their conversion to Christianity, only half accepted the faith, and continued to cling to their

old superstitions. From among such half-converted Jews, sprung up the Ebionites, who had already been answered by the glorious Gospel of St. John; and from among Pagans, in a similar state of half-conversion, came forth the Gnostics. Besides these, others also arose; and by denying the fundamental Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, they afforded the Church an occasion of entering gradually upon the work of her dogmatic development of doctrine, in declaring her Faith in this Mystery against such impugnors as Theodotus, Paul of Samosata, and Sabellius. The Trinity, the secret Mystery of God, was the truth attacked in this secret time; and a more quiet and secret opposition was sufficient to resist the attack. Yet the defining power of the Church was then sufficiently shown; and such defining power was necessary to be manifested, in order to defend the truth actually denied, and to affirm principles which, if left unasserted, would leave confusion about the more outward and glorious Mystery of the Incarnation.

When this hidden period had run its course, an altered scene is presented before us. A great event occurs in the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, and the Church is now beckoned forth from the catacombs. The seed, moistened by the blood of three centuries, shoots up above the surface, assumes the form which it is to bear to the end, and with its innate vigour, braces itself against attacks which are to be directed against it. Christianity is to be no longer the religion of individuals and families only. It becomes a state religion, and with the advantages, it inherits the perils incident to its new and public position. The seed, which, we have said, after an apparent death of three centuries had become visible,

though, in the glad hope with which it shoots from the earth, it seems to have the promises of a steady and certain growth unto maturity, yet on its very appearance above the surface, becomes exposed to dangers it knew not of before, when the earth which covered it screened it, at least, from the inclemency of the weather, and secured it against the ravages of blight. Paradoxical as it may seem, yet it proved to be the case, that what was a great blessing to the Church, became an occasion of the greatest evil; and what was the heaviest curse, gave rise to the greatest good. Liberty, for which the Church is always praying, gave a cloak to heresy; and heresy, which the Church always abhors, when it now became more outspoken, created the necessity of those magnificent dogmatical definitions, in which the Church boldly declared her doctrine in words which are still sounding in our ears. The struggle of the Church is now no longer for life, but for truth. The most subtle and obstinate heretics that the Church has ever had to deal with, arise at this time, and chiefly assail the second great fundamental Mystery of the Incarnation. To more outward attacks, a more outward mode of defence is adopted; and, ever solicitous about the trust committed to her, the Church, fortified by the Holy Spirit, meets, by an open resistance, the foes which openly assail her.

With this outward change in the circumstances of the Church, becomes inaugurated the period of the Œcumenical Councils. Heresy and danger of relaxation called upon the Church to assume an attitude of defence uncalled for until now, and so we find her standing forward in the solemn majesty of the dogmatical definitions drawn

up in protection of Faith and discipline. In a little more than two centuries five Ecumenical Councils are held; and it is in the East that the Church is called upon to exert that outward power which she has at all times so faithfully and so prudently wielded in defence of the cause entrusted to her. From the commencement of the fourth century down to the present time, eighteen Ecumenical Councils have been held. The first eight were held in the East, the last ten in the West. Two main points have uniformly been attended to in these assemblies: Faith and Discipline. In the earlier Councils Faith has been the chief object of defence: in the later ones Discipline; but as both always go together, and as the Discipline of the Church oftentimes is an expression of her Faith, Councils, which have especially been called together in order to defend a doctrine which called for further definition, have also enacted Canons of Discipline; and those which have been especially concerned in enforcing Discipline, have also dogmatically defined articles of Faith. Compare, for instance, the first with the last: Nicæa with Trent. In the first Council, assembled especially in defence of the Divinity of our dear Lord against Arius, besides anathematizing those who denied that doctrine, and developing that portion of the Apostles' Creed which affirms it, the Fathers fixed the time for the observance of Easter, and drew up twenty other disciplinary canons. And in the last Council, though it was mostly engaged regarding Discipline, the articles appended to the Nicene Creed, in that profession of Faith generally known under the name of the Creed of Pope Pius IV., but which is in reality the Creed of the Council of Trent, show how a defence of the Faith against the

heresies of the time went hand-in-hand with the protection of Discipline.

To summarize in a few words, for the better help of the memory, the history of the past Councils, I may give you the names of the eighteen Councils thus:—Of the first eight held in the East, two were celebrated at Nicæa, namely, the first and the seventh; four at Constantinople, one at Ephesus, and one at Chalcedon. These ranged from the year of our Lord 325, the first of Nicæa, to the year 869, the date of the last of Constantinople. Then the seat of the Councils passed over to the West. Of the ten that have been celebrated in this part of the world, five have sat at St. John's Lateran Church in Rome, and are called the Five Lateran Councils; three sat in France, namely, two at Lyons and one at Vienne; one sat at Florence, and the last at Trent. These have ranged from the year 1123, the date of the first of Lateran, to the year 1563, the close of the Council of Trent. You may thus notice what I observed at the beginning, that three centuries elapsed before the first Council of Nicæa; nearly three centuries intervened between the fourth of Constantinople, and the first of Lateran; and three centuries have again passed over between Trent and this approaching Council of the Vatican—called the Vatican, because, though held in Rome where the Lateran Councils also sat, it is to be celebrated in the glorious Basilica of St. Peter on the Vatican. So great has been the work that has been done by the Councils of the Church, that we find them in every age appealed to as the great exponents of the mind of the Church, and consequently as the interpreters of the revelations of God. St. Gregory the Great—a

name which must be for ever venerated in England, on account of the special interest he took in the conversion of our country, and on that account called by our own Venerable Bede, the Apostle of England—has left on record his reverence for the first four Councils, for he declared that he venerated them as he did the four Gospels. The decrees and anathemas of Œcumenical Councils have ever been accepted as decisive of Orthodoxy; and, therefore, after the first Œcumenical Council of Nicæa, the Arians stood branded by a stigma which was recognized universally as condemnatory of their heresy. So also the Macedonians after the first of Constantinople, the Nestorians after Ephesus, and the Eutychians after Chalcedon; and if to this day, a denial of the glorious truths asserted and defended in those Councils is ventured upon, we point to our fathers and elders who were then assembled together, as the safe and solid exponents of the same truths delivered in the Gospels. Martyrs have not hesitated to die in defence of the decisions of a Council, as the Apostles did for the truths of the Gospel. How beautiful is the instance recorded of St. Peter, the Dominican Martyr, in the thirteenth century, who when bleeding from the fatal wound of his executioners, recited the creed he had been taught in his infancy!

What these glorious meetings have done, has been that amongst other advantages which they have secured to the Church, they have affirmed in the highest and most solemn manner, the authority of the Church. The Pope and the Prelates may not unfittingly be called the standing army of the Church; and, as such a security in any kingdom is at all times available to keep down revolt, and

to establish safety in case a revolt should break out, so at all times likewise is there existing in the Church a sufficient guarantee for the safety of her children, in the midst of any spiritual dangers which are possible, or which actually present themselves. But there are times when a country has to rally her forces, and, either by acting on the defensive in time of an attack from a more powerful foe, or by taking vigorous measures towards suppressing insubordination at home, those on whom the responsibility of the public safety devolves, have to take measures adequate to the emergency. So is it, also that the Church, when circumstances call for it, shows her power, and exerts her authority most strikingly and solemnly in the grand majesty of her Œcumenical Councils, in which she denounces heresies which assail her from without, and protects discipline against relaxation, which may grow up within. Most notably do these Councils show the reality of power contained in the collective Episcopate. For in the Catholic Church, at least, there can never be anything else but an affectionate deference and submission on the part of the people towards those who watch over them, having to give an account of their souls. And so essential is this bond between Prelates and the people, that, as we have had occasion in a previous lecture to affirm, the great Fathers of the Church, defenders of her unity, have defined a Church to be "the people united with the Bishop." What a noble sight will be presented in the forthcoming assembly, when Bishops from every quarter of the globe, to the number, it may be, of more than eight hundred, will come together with one mind, and will send out their decrees with one voice! Then will the world know,

if it pretend to ignore it at other times, that there is upon earth such a reality as the Catholic Church, that it has outlived the opposition of so many centuries, and that the gates of Hell have not yet prevailed against it. Then will those who, unhappily, in this country still differ from us, though, apparently, approaching more closely to us in their ritual observance of outward worship, see how striking is the difference between us and them in our attitude towards the Episcopate. Like those who seemed to have been startled into the faith by witnessing miracles greater than their own powers could achieve, they may then well exclaim : *Truly the finger of God is here ;* and with the admiring crowds who gathered about our Blessed Lord, they may thank God, *Who hath given such power unto men.*

What, again, has been done by the great Councils of the Church is this : they have most clearly demonstrated what is meant by the development of Christian doctrine. They have laid down the principle by which we are able to answer those who object to the Catholic Church, because her later creeds are more fully expressed than her earlier ones, that there has been added by the Church, doctrines to those originally revealed and committed to her custody. The Councils have most manifestly shown the difference between implicit and explicit faith. The former is incapable of change or increase. No new dogmas are revealed, or are superadded to those which were deposited in the custody of the Church in the days of the Apostles. But explicit faith grows accordingly as the householder, to whom all is committed, draws out of his treasury old declarations or new definitions of old truths, when the denial of heretics, or the

call of the faithful, demands the exercise of such a power. The earlier Councils, in their defence of the radical mysteries of the Christian Faith, spoke out thus openly when circumstances demanded it. So, when we compare the Nicene Creed, in its most perfectly expressed form, taking in the additions made in the first Council of Constantinople, and by the later defining power of the Church, with the Apostles' Creed, we see how the Faith, always remaining implicitly the same, became more fully explicit in the Articles which concern the Second and Third Persons of the ever Blessed Trinity. *And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord*, the expression of the earlier Creed, though containing within it the whole truth, was not considered a sufficiently full declaration of the unity of Substance between Son and Father, to test the orthodoxy of the impious Arian impugnors of the glorious Mystery of the Incarnation: and therefore the Nicene Creed thus put forth this Article of our Faith: *And in one Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages: God of God: Light of Light: True God of True God: begotten not made: of One Substance with the Father: by whom all things were made.* And when the Macedonian heretics denied of the Holy Ghost, what the Arians had denied of God the Son, the same Creed, with additions supplied in the first Council of Constantinople, stated of the Third Person thus: *And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Lifegiver, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified: who spoke by the Prophets.* When, therefore, in the sixteenth century, the same Church, which had thus developed her statements of faith, when circumstances demanded it, was again called upon to

do the same in consequence of the denial of later heretics, the principle was always observed, and to heretical denials was opposed a distinct profession of the articles attacked. The Creed of the Council of Trent, is therefore to the Creed of Nicæa, what this latter Creed is to the Creed of the Apostles. Let those who presume to accuse the Catholic Church of adding to the doctrine of the Apostles, because the Creed of Trent is more fully expressed than the Nicene Creed, ask themselves whether the Councils of Nicæa and Constantinople are to be condemned, because, in their solicitude for the faith of the Apostles, they outwardly expressed what the earliest Creed always implied. Nicæa and Trent must stand or fall together.

Œcumenical Councils have, moreover, as a consequence of the motive which has suggested or necessitated their assembling, served as tests of Orthodoxy, as we have fully shown in our previous lectures. But they have done this, not only at the time, or immediately after the time of their sitting, but they serve as everlasting proofs of faith and obedience. What has once been decided in a Council as of Faith, is decided once for ever; and the anathemas pronounced in a Council against those who obstinately resist its decrees, are for all times, and are to be considered as being, at the very present moment, levelled against those who deserve them. Therefore we can understand how perfectly in accordance with the principle of the unchangeableness of faith, and the consequent supreme authority of decisions in matters of faith, pronounced by the highest judicial tribunal, was the answer recently given, affectionately but firmly, by our Holy Father, to the rash and strange proposal of a self-constituted representative of

Protestantism, to attend the Council, and argue in the presence of the Prelates of the whole of Christendom, in defence of heretical doctrines, which have been withering under the condemnation of three centuries explicitly, and under the implicit ban of eighteen centuries. So, when this nineteenth Œcumenical Council shall, by the blessing of God, have done its work, and have come to a happy conclusion, as God grant it may! its decrees will be enrolled among the canons of the Church, and will be held as a perpetual testimony of the teaching which is to be followed by future generations. For this Council, in perfect harmony, as it will prove itself to be, with the past, will have the power of influencing the future for ever; and so the text which we now appeal to as a guide for our duty, will be equally applied to by generations to come; and, when they shall ask questions which the present assemblage of the fathers of the Church will answer, it will be said to them: Go and see what the Council of the Vatican has declared: *Ask your father, and he will declare to you; your elders, and they will tell you.*

One necessary proof of Orthodoxy, evoked by these great Councils, has been the great and important fact of intercommunion between Churches united together into one body, and the communion of each with the centre acknowledged by all. The meaning of a Council of the whole Church implies that there is such an union in the parts, and such a connexion with one common centre. And, therefore, when we wish to prove to those who are now separated from us, that the very fact of their separation from the Churches of the whole habitable globe, and their severance from the trunk to which all the others are attached, is a proof of their not being that

Church, which is One and Catholic, we point, for our best illustration and most convincing refutation of any claims which they may put forward to being the true home of the Faith, to the Œcumenical Councils, in which the fact of visible and real communion has been established beyond the possibility of denial. Those who teach that strange and unmeaning doctrine of a secret and unseen connexion between branch Churches, have an argument unanswerable against them, afforded by these great manifestations of outward union. In a tree, between the root and the branches there does intervene the trunk. The root is invisible, as Christ is the invisible Head of the Church, but the trunk is visible, and is that which is immediately connected with the root, and through which circulates that sap which is communicated to each branch. Œcumenical Councils assuredly demonstrate the unreality of that branch Church theory, which allows a constant course of outward disobedience to be in harmony with inward union.

From what we have said, it will follow that we may apply to the authority of past Councils with regard to some of those questions at issue between the Catholic Church and those who differ from us in this country. We will select two which are most prominent amongst them: the Supremacy of the Holy See, and Devotion to the ever Blessed Virgin Mother of God. With regard to the Supremacy of the Pope, limiting ourselves to the first four Councils, those of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, although efforts have been made to show that the Supremacy of the Pope has not been demonstrated in those Councils, yet facts which are beyond dispute, and which are too stubborn not to be recognized, place in a very

striking manner before us, what was the acknowledgment of those early centuries in support of this essential reality of the Church of Christ. In the first Œcumenical Council of Nicæa, the legates of Pope St. Sylvester presided in his name, and subscribed first, styling themselves as deputies *for the venerable man our Pope and Bishop Holy Sylvester*.* These were Osius, Bishop of Cordova, and two Priests, Vitus and Vincentius; and though there were present the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, they subscribed after the legates of the Roman Pontiff. In the second Œcumenical Council, the first of Constantinople, we find the recognition of the Supremacy of the Pope in a different manner. It had been summoned merely as an Eastern Council, to condemn the heresy of Macedonius, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. The Council was not Œcumenical in its summoning, nor in its action or progress, but only became so when after its close three Bishops were sent to Rome to Pope St. Damasus, who was at the time holding a Council of the Bishops of the Western Church, to obtain his approval and confirmation.† The third General Council was that of Ephesus, a glorious assemblage of the Episcopate, in which the title of Mother of God was vindicated for the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in which it was clearly proved by the close and able arguing of St. Cyril, that whoever denied her that title, virtually denied the Mystery of the Incarnation, by dividing our Blessed Lord into two persons, and thus asserting that He who redeemed us was not truly God and man at the same time. St. Cyril and the other legates of Pope St.

* Labbe, tom. ii. p. 50.

† Ibid. p. 960.

Celestine preside, and at the end the Acts are sent to Rome for due confirmation. But the strongest evidence of the immense power of the Bishop of Rome, and his authority in condemning heresies and in defending orthodoxy, is to be found in the fourth Œcumenical Council, held in the year of our Lord 451, against the Monophysites under Eutyches, who denied the existence of two Natures in Christ. These heretics had succeeded in gaining approval in a largely attended Council, held at Ephesus, which professed to be Œcumenical, though only called and presided over by Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria. But St. Leo the Great, then Pope, ordered a Council to assemble at Chalcedon, and appointed three Bishops and two Priests to preside as his legates. At the opening of the Council, the Pope's legates stated that they were commissioned by the Bishop of Rome, "the head of all the Churches," to require that Dioscorus should not sit in the Council, "for having presumed to hold a Council without the authority of the Apostolic See, which never had been done, nor was lawful to do." In this Council of Chalcedon (admitted, remember, by the present Church of England in its authorized declarations to be a Council approved by all men), Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, a man with such immense influence as to have controlled a large Council and gained it over to his cause, is made to stand forward as a culprit, and is condemned and deposed by the authority of the Bishop of Rome. The Pope's legates then, in the full assembly of Bishops to the number of more than six hundred, pronounce their sentence in these words: "The most holy Archbishop of Rome, Leo, through us and this present Council, with the Apostle St. Peter, who is the rock and foundation of

the Catholic Church and of the Orthodox Faith, deprives him of the Episcopal Dignity and every sacerdotal ministry.”* Does the Pope at the present day pretend to greater power than this? Or (a question which well deserves an answer) will the English Church admit Rome now to have the power exercised in the days of primitive purity of doctrine? This is what Councils have affirmed upon one point at issue between ourselves and the Church of England.

Then, again, there is another doctrine of the Catholic Church, a glorious doctrine, as we are glad boldly to call it, in reference to which we stand in very marked opposition to the Church of England—a doctrine intimately connected with the great Mystery of the Incarnation; and that is the doctrine which concerns the position of the ever blessed Mother of our dearest Lord. This may well serve now-a-days as a mark of the Catholic Church; for there is no doubt that, even more prominently than that of Papal Supremacy, it is pointed at *as a sign to be contradicted* by those who unfortunately allow themselves to differ from us. One of the most ordinary protests, if it may not even be called an universal protest, made by Protestants against the Catholic Church, is against our recognition of the honour due to *Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ*. Directly a person acknowledges himself in English society to be a Catholic, his attitude towards the Blessed Virgin is brought forward as a matter of reproach. Even the High Church party are timid in asserting in practice, what they cannot deny in theory, upon this article of Christian faith. Suppose, if in order to test the orthodoxy of the Seventy who some

* Labbe, tom. iv. p. 425.

two years ago formed the Pan-Anglican Synod, it had been put to them to sign the first anathematism of St. Cyril in the Council of Ephesus, in which he pronounced anathema to all who deny that the Blessed Virgin is Mother of God, what would have been the result? Would the alarm have been less appalling, than if under the hall in which they were assembled together, another gunpowder plot had been contrived, to put a speedy end to all their deliberations? And yet go to the Council of Ephesus, the third Œcumenical Council, one of those held in the times acknowledged by the English Church as times of primitive purity of doctrine, and one of the Councils which the same Church declares to be admitted and approved of all men, and you will read at its inauguration, the words spoken by St. Cyril, the leading spirit of that august assembly: "Hail, Holy Trinity, Who hast called us together into this Church of Mary, Mother of God." (For it was in a Church under her especial patronage that the Council was sitting.) "Hail Mary, Mother of God, venerable treasure of the universe, crown of virginity, sceptre of Orthodoxy, abode of Him Who cannot be limited to space! By thee is the Trinity glorified, the cross praised and venerated throughout the world; by thee the heavens rejoice, angels are gladdened, demons are put to flight, and man recovers his claim to heaven."* Mind, my dear Brethren, I am not quoting St. Alphonsus's "Glories of Mary," a work so much misunderstood by those who have no faith in the Divine Maternity, and who strain all its expressions into objections against us. I am quoting the words of a Father of the Church, early in the

* Labbe, tom. iii. p. 583.

fifth century, spoken, and accepted enthusiastically in the third Œcumenical Council. Could you expect to hear these words spoken in the Abbey of our city? Is there a single Anglican Clergyman, who would dare to utter them in this pious city of Bath? And yet those who refuse to sanction them, stand condemned on their own admission; and if they had happened to have lived in those days, would have been anathematized as Nestorian heretics. Remember the anathema has never been revoked, but is approved of in the Anglican Church; and therefore if they would have been heretics then, what else are they now? It is not I who speak: I am only telling you what was done by the Council of Ephesus, in the year of our Lord 431, in the days of "primitive purity of doctrine." So strong on our side is the testimony of this glorious Council, that the Protestant Bishop Burnet tries to qualify it by stating, that "the whole world was then filled with very extravagant devotion to Mary."* What he calls *extravagant* devotion, was the devotion prevailing throughout the world, fourteen hundred years ago. If we apply our text, and ask our fathers and elders, what answer shall we obtain?

So strongly, indeed, does the testimony of what the early Œcumenical Councils have done, tell in favour of the claims and the present position of the Church of Rome, that one of the most learned of those among the Anglican clergy,† who, within the last few years have acknowledged these claims and have submitted to them, was induced to take the step by a challenge made to him by one, who stands almost the first amongst that happy

* Burnet on Art, xxii.

† The late Dr. Jerrard.

company, to consult the records of the first four Councils, and to see whether he could then possibly withhold his submission to Rome. He accepted the challenge, read the records, and became a Catholic. Would that others, who so easily allow themselves to be misguided, would have the industry to make the same investigation, for it must be followed by a good result! Would that they would remember the days of old, and consult the generations that have gone before them!

I have told you that it is not the first time three centuries have intervened between Œcumenical Councils. As Nicæa proved that three hundred years of persecution had not crushed the life out of the Church, so does the present gathering of Bishops in its cheerful activity prove that the genuine Orthodox spirit is as sterling as ever. We have just had an evidence of it afforded in the news of the past week. If there is any country in the world that boasts of a free and independent spirit, it is America. There we might expect to find men who would not be dictated to, or be called away to attend the mere court of a foreign potentate. Indeed, the republican form of government which prevails, and is valued there, would naturally create a want of sympathy for that monarchical form which obtains in the Catholic Church. And yet all the Bishops of this free country are hurrying off to the Council, followed by an enthusiasm unequalled, perhaps, anywhere else in the world. And the Primate of that Hierarchy, the Archbishop of Baltimore, has but just started, escorted to the ship which was to bear him away, by fifty thousand of the faithful—more than the adult population of one of our largest cities.

Depend upon it, my dear brethren, as we point now to the Councils that have gone before, future generations will point to this Council of the Vatican, as expressing the faith and spirit of the nineteenth century of the Catholic Church. And when all who are now upon earth will have passed before the awful Judgment Seat of Almighty God, this great event will be found to have been set up, like our dear Lord, for the resurrection or fall of many. Those who have been loyal to it will have proved their Orthodoxy; to others, who have rejected this immensely powerful evidence of truth, it will be said—*I know you not*. Learn obedience from your fathers and elders; do and believe what they tell you. And among blessings for which you will one day have to thank God, will this be found, that in His goodness and mercy He has drawn together those who have to watch over you as having to give an account for your souls, in order to strengthen your faith and hope, and to give you another encouragement on your way to Heaven.

LECTURE VI.

AN ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL, THE CLEAREST MANIFESTATION OF UNITY AND CATHOLICITY.

Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee . . . that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.—JOHN xvii. 20, 21.

IN opening before you, in our previous lecture, what has been done in the past ages of the Church, by those majestic meetings of the Episcopate of the whole habitable globe, which are called Œcumenical Councils, I told you of their zealous defence of Doctrine and Discipline. And after enumerating for you what these eighteen Councils were, the first eight having been held in the East, and the last ten in the West, I told you of the veneration held towards Councils by the early Fathers, and how well they have at all times deserved the same tribute. They have always represented in the highest and most imposing manner the authority of the Church. They have affirmed, especially in the Creeds which they have drawn up and promulgated, the principle of the development of Doctrine, stating explicitly what was always implicitly believed, when a denial on the part of heretics required such a statement. They have served, not in theory, but in the most palpably practical manner, as tests of Orthodoxy, demonstrating in an unmistakable manner who are in communion with each other, and with a central bond of union, and who are not. They have nobly established

the dignity of the Episcopate, and have afforded to the Prelates, whom we have to obey, the opportunity of showing how they watch over us, and how they are ever under the sense of the responsibility they bear towards our souls. And with reference to two points on which the Catholic Church in these days and in this country, is notably attacked—namely, the Supremacy of the Holy See, and the honour of the ever blessed Mother of God, we saw how an appeal to the very earliest Councils was decisive in our favour, and how, when we remember the days of old, and consult the generations that have gone before us, they bear most positive and definite testimony in behalf of our position.

This evening I shall have to show how the great event now so close upon us, an Œcumenical Council, is the clearest manifestation of those marks of the true Church, Unity and Catholicity. And when I mention these two qualities and marks of the Church, founded upon earth by our dearest Lord, I mention what not only our own ideas of that Church must press upon us as being essential to it, but what filled the mind of our Blessed Lord, when He was instituting it to do His work, and was fitting it as a Spouse to Himself.

In proof of His idea of His own Church, I have brought before you words of His, uttered on the most touching occasion of His life. He is making His farewell address to His Apostles, on the eve of His death. He is seated in Council with them for the last time before His Passion. He has eaten His Last Supper, has instituted the Sacrament of Love, has washed the feet of His Apostles, and now proceeds to pour out the most fervent feelings of His Sacred Heart in those words

which our own St. John, who was leaning on His breast at the time, has recorded. He ends His address with a prayer to His Father, a prayer for His Church, and especially for the Unity of that Church. *I pray for them, O Father! whom Thou hast given to Me, for they are Thine. Keep them in Thy name, that they may be one, as We also are. Sanctify them in truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who, through their word, shall believe in Me, that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.* Before proceeding more directly to the proof of the proposition which I have announced, I must say a word upon these marks of Unity and Catholicity which our Blessed Lord has set upon His Church. And first of all, with regard to Unity. Let us understand what is meant, and must be meant by this, as a quality of the Church. It must have a meaning, and it must be capable of definition, and therefore is not a mere vague, indefinite something, which, implying everything else, really excludes itself. It cannot, for instance, be supposed that a Church which is One, is made up of all manner of dissentient Churches, having a power of repulsion instead of a force of attraction towards each other. Three elements are required in the Unity of the Church, and if any of these be wanting, I feel that you must at once agree in pronouncing that the idea of Unity is destroyed. There must be Unity in Faith, Unity in Government, and Unity in Worship. A Church in which these three elements are manifested, is not unlike the Blessed Trinity, Three in One; and this our Lord

wished His Church to be, *that they may be one as We also are*. In the Blessed Trinity the Father and the Son are one, because there is a bond of Union between Them, and that is the Holy Spirit proceeding from both. And it is this same Holy Spirit who abides in the Church for ever, and maintains it in perpetual Unity. Take away from the Church Unity of Government, you take away the work of the Father, who is the Ruler of all things; take away Unity of Worship and Sacraments, you take away the work of the Son, the Lamb slain for our redemption, the object of worship in heaven and on earth, to whom is due honour, glory, praise, thanksgiving for ever, whose Precious Blood is applied through the Sacraments for the life and support of each of the faithful. Take away Unity of Faith, and you drive away the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, and the security against error for all times. Well, therefore, did our dearest Lord pray for what was nearest to His Heart, in reference to His Church, that it might always continue to be what He made it, and that it might prove itself to be His by this very mark : *That they may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me*. Is it making Unity too strict to require these three elements? Certainly it is not a strictness from which the Catholic Church shrinks; and what can be stricter in point of Unity, than the Unity of God, to which it is likened?

And Catholicity, the mark claimed for the Church in the Creed, the Holy *Catholic* Church: this is also an idea which entered essentially into the plan of our Holy Redeemer in founding His Church, and sending it out for its noble and holy work. It was here, especially that the Church of the New Law was to differ from the Jewish

Church, that of the Old. The Jewish Church was a National Church: the Christian Church was to be the Church of all nations. This is expressed by St. Paul, when he says: *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* (1 Tim. ii. 4.) As Unity has three elements essential to its existence, so has Catholicity. The Church of Christ must be Catholic or Universal in place: it must reach *all nations*, or else it does not fulfill its commission. It must be Catholic or Universal in the truths which it teaches: *Teach all those things which I have committed to you.* And it must be Catholic or Universal in time: *Behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the world.* And, therefore, the Catholic Church of to-day must in every quarter of the globe, be one and the same with the Catholic Church of the Apostles. That He might make His Church Catholic was, as St. John tells us, a motive of the death of our Holy Redeemer. For after the High Priest Caiphas prophesied that it was *expedient that one man should die for the people*, the Evangelist adds his own comment to this unconscious prophecy: *This he spoke not of himself; but being the high priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not only for the nation, but to gather together, into one, the children of God that were dispersed.* (John xi. 51, 52.)

Nor are Unity and Catholicity to be considered as marks and qualities which are independent of each other. They mutually imply each other. The truth which is one is so in such a manner, that no accident of place can alter it, and prevent its still remaining the same. And being a necessary truth it ought to be recognized and

to find its place everywhere. The three elements of Unity imply Catholicity. There must be Unity in Faith *everywhere*. There must be Unity in Government *everywhere*. There must be Unity in Worship and Sacraments *everywhere*. Imagine a place where Faith may be different, it ceases to be One, and because the place itself is an exception, it ceases to be Catholic at the same time. Although it might appear that humanly speaking Unity and Catholicity would each impede or prevent the perfection of the other, it is not so in the Catholic Church. It may seem easier to preserve Unity in a very limited than in a very extended sphere; and it may also seem that national prejudices and jealousies would arise to break up what might in one spot be kept together. But in the works of God it is not so; and in His Church the one Spirit who presides over it draws all its members, wherever they may be, into one; and the Unity of this Church is all the safer and the better kept, because it is under the care of so many zealous defenders.

And as Unity and Catholicity are not merely qualities of the Church, but *marks* also, they must be manifest in the Church which claims them, or else they do not answer the purpose of a mark. A tree is to be known by its fruit: and fruit is certainly a visible, sensible, and tangible evidence of the goodness or badness of a tree. Unity and Catholicity, therefore, in the Church must be *visible*, and, above all things, must exclude the manifestation of the contradictory qualities of dissension and nationalism. A Church, which is divided within itself and separated visibly from every other, cannot, whatever other property it may have, lay claim to Unity. The tree, Unity, cannot produce the fruit, dissension. And

that which is by its very constitution essentially limited to one nation, whose supremacy is national and limited, cannot be the Church of all nations, and claim to be the Catholic Church, which *is* the Church of all nations. Communion with one central reality, and intercommunion between all the members, are, as we have before had occasion to urge, proofs and tests of Unity and Catholicity. This was always the argument of St. Augustine against the Donatist schismatics. They were numerous in North Africa, but unknown elsewhere. They rejected communion with the centre, Rome, and no Churches held intercommunion with them. They were not the One Catholic Church, because they could not stand these tests. And when some of them, laying claim to the name Catholic, pretended to a better knowledge of the Greek language than the Saint, and asserted that from its etymology it implied "one" or "whole," the holy Doctor answered that though he did not pretend to be a good Greek scholar, he knew quite enough of that language to be aware that the word Catholic meant "according to the whole," or "throughout the whole," and that it belonged to that Church, of which our Lord said that it was to witness to Him to the uttermost bounds of the earth.* We may now proceed more immediately to our proposition.

An Œcumenical Council is the clearest manifestation of Unity and Catholicity. It serves to bring out these two marks of the Church, both directly and indirectly. Directly—for the very object of such a meeting is to bring together into one place those that are dispersed

* S. Aug. apud Schrader de Unitate Romana, p. 2.

into every quarter of the globe. The bringing into one place is a manifestation of Unity: the fact of those who are brought together having been dispersed in every quarter of the globe is a proof of Catholicity. And therefore, when, at the very commencement of our lectures, I defined for you what was meant by an Œcumenical Council, that it was an assembling together of the chief pastors of the Church under their lawful head, in such a definition we are but affirming the two great qualities of Unity and Catholicity. And the constitution of an Œcumenical Council, when it becomes a fact, and is at its work, carrying out the object for which it has been convoked, is the clearest possible manifestation of the same two qualities. The qualities are, then, no longer kept in the dark, or under a bushel—they stand forward in an imposing attitude, and even force themselves upon the notice of all who have eyes to see with. As at the opening of our Parliament, when the Sovereign is surrounded by the Ministers and Members of both Houses, there is a living illustration of the British Constitution, so, in an Œcumenical Council, when the Holy Father, the visible Head of the Church, is presiding, either in person or represented by his legates, there is shown to the whole world what is meant by a Church which claims to be, and which really is, One and Catholic. And, again, the special intention of each Œcumenical Council is either closely or remotely connected with these two marks; for what the Church aims at in these assemblies is the defence of the Faith, or the preservation of discipline, and therefore she sends out, with one voice, her decrees on these subjects of her solicitude into every quarter of the globe. And what, in the last place, we have every

right to urge as a direct proof of the manifestation of the Unity and Catholicity of the Church, is the success of Œcumenical Councils in doing the work which has been marked out for them. From the days of the Council of Jerusalem, when the Apostles assembled together to consider upon the matter which then arose for debate, to the Council of Trent, when circumstances arose which called upon the Church to pronounce upon important questions of Faith and Discipline, the decrees of these Councils have been in force, and are always pointed to as of the highest authority in the Universal Church. The Holy Ghost has dictated them, and they are decisive, beyond question, and beyond appeal. When, therefore, we take Œcumenical Councils, not in the abstract and in theory, but in practice; when we consider what is their object, what is their constitution, what has been the special intention which has called each into existence, and what has been the success of each Council, we have a very strong direct evidence that these Councils have most clearly manifested the Unity and Catholicity of the Church. And always bear this in mind, my dear brethren, for it is too important to be ever forgotten, that that Church alone is the Church of Christ, which can show about it the marks which He Himself stamped upon it, and which possesses the qualities which He made essential to its existence. If Œcumenical Councils, then, prove these marks and qualities, they supply most important evidence in a matter which is too sacred and too intimately connected with all that most closely concerns our salvation, to allow us to ignore their existence or to question their importance.

But perhaps the indirect manner in which these Coun-

cils manifest Unity and Catholicity is even of more practical importance, as it shows us how they have the effect of declaring, in an unmistakable manner, who are not in the Church of Christ. With reference to error, truth is invested with a repelling power. It rejects it, as it were, instinctively, and cannot hold communication with it. A lover of truth necessarily hates falsehood, and the moment he would compromise with it, he sacrifices his character, and gives up his loyalty to principle. Well does St. Paul exclaim: *What participation hath justice with injustice? or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?* (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.) And although exclusiveness is sometimes brought as a charge against the Catholic Church, and the very decrees of Councils are censured because of their anathemas against the errors which they condemn, yet the Church, in her guardianship of truth, must keep away the approach of error, or else be unfaithful to the trust committed to her. If the Council of Nicæa had not anathematized Arius and his followers upon their obstinate perseverance in error, it would have shown a weakness and a vacillation which would have been impossible under the superintendence of the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of Fortitude as well as of Wisdom. To defend truth and to profess a love for it, and yet to hesitate about the rejection and condemnation of error, would be to imitate the sin of the first King of Israel, for which he was cast off by God, and so severely rebuked by Samuel. Saul had been made King, and the defence of Israel had been entrusted to him. With regard to the enemies of that kingdom, he was com-

manded by Almighty God to show no mercy—he was not only to subdue them, but he was to slay them. But because, in an hour of mistaken policy, he spared, when he ought to have exterminated, he himself was rejected, *and the Lord repented that He had made him King over Israel.* (1 Kings xv.) And in like manner, in every Œcumenical Council, Almighty God, who is a jealous God, directs the Pastors of His Church so to defend their cause, which is His cause, as to remove and to repel all who are not members of His Kingdom upon earth. So, in the present instance, as all who are really Pastors are drawn towards that meeting which is under the protection of the Spirit of Truth, those who are not of the Church manifest their aversion, and can find no place in this great gathering of Christendom. Their very exclusion, at the same time that it shows what *they* are not, is an evidence, by their absence, of the orthodoxy of those whom they contradict. Where Belial is not, there is Christ.

An Œcumenical Council, too, affords one of the most palpable means of dispelling the vain and unmeaning pretence to the glorious name of Catholic upon the part of those who are out of union with the Holy See of Rome. St. Augustine denied the title logically and heartily to the Donatist schismatics when they ventured to claim it, and especially on the ground that their want of visible communion with Rome was fatal to their claim; and in like manner it is our duty to show our reverence for the name which belongs exclusively to the One Church dispersed, and yet united, throughout the whole world, by consistently withholding it from those upon whom it always sits uneasily, even when they dare to usurp it.

Like a garment which was made for one person, it shows that it cannot fit another whose form and dimensions are completely different from those of the rightful and original owner. For how often do we hear it said now-a-days by persons who are out of communion with us: "We are Catholics, but you are Roman Catholics"? Our answer is and ought to be: Are you in communion with the Universal world? Are you in communion with that centre acknowledged by the universal world? This centre rejects you, and you reject it, and in the very fact of this rejection consists your isolation, your nationalism, and your position which is the very contradiction of Catholic. If you are Catholic, why does an Œcumenical Council not recognize you, for the terms Œcumenical and Catholic are identical in idea? Unless words are intended, not simply to hide our thoughts, but to misrepresent the truth, there can be no greater abuse of a term, or a more untrue assertion, than that the name Catholic belongs in any way to those whose position is un-Catholic and anti-Catholic.

I am bound, my dear brethren, in love for the sacred cause of truth, and in respect for a holy and a venerable name, to repudiate strongly and solemnly the claim of such aspirants to a title which, in their inmost heart, they must themselves feel does not belong to them. And I am bound to do it for the love of souls which are misguided, and may be led to imagine themselves rightful possessors of another's property, unless the declaration is loudly made that it is none of theirs. To be Catholic, means to be in intercommunion, that is to say, to be in outward, visible, and real fellowship in faith, government, and sacramental ministry with churches in every part of

the habitable globe. To be Catholic, means to be in acknowledged and practical communion with the centre, Rome; admitted to be the chief and centre by Churches in every part of the universe. To be Catholic, means to be the very contradiction to national, and therefore excludes a supremacy which is limited to one nation. But in all these points the Protestant Church, that is to say the Anglican Church (for it means the same) excludes the reality of Catholic, and why can it venture to put forth a title to the name? It is not in intercommunion with Churches throughout the universe, and therefore is not Catholic. It is not in communion with the Holy See, the centre admitted by Churches in every nation, and therefore is not Catholic. It is essentially national, it is Anglican (to give it the softest name), it is under the sworn supremacy of a national sovereign, and therefore is not and cannot be Catholic. It claims no place, and no place is left for it, in an Œcumenical, or Catholic Council, and therefore is denounced in the face of the whole world, as not being Catholic. And yet there are those in this melancholy state of isolation, who say: "We are Catholics, and you are Roman Catholics." And they say this to members of that Church which is now manifesting itself, through the glad testimony of the whole world, to be the One Church of all nations.

But I will give you five decisive tests, by which the falsity of the claim can be brought most evidently before you. When you, my dear Catholic brethren, happen to hear the claim made by Protestants to the name of Catholic, ask them these five questions. First, ask them: *What is the Religion of England?* Is England a Catholic country, or is it not? Is the Religion herein esta-

blished by law, that which is always called and known by the name of Catholic? What does the whole of the world say upon this point? What is the universal testimony of historical or geographical descriptions of England, when its Religion is alluded to? My dear brethren, would to God that England were a Catholic country! It once was so, but it lost its title to that name, at the time of its severance from union with Rome, and has ever since ranked foremost amongst the Protestant kingdoms of Europe. And yet those who pretend that they are Catholics, are of the religion of England, they belong to its established Church, or perhaps to even a lower form of Christianity, and cannot see the unreasonableness of their claim, and the untruthfulness of their assertion. Here is the logical way of putting it for them. I belong to the religion of England: the religion of England is not Catholic: but I am a Catholic. The value of this conclusion shows what truth there is in the statement of those who do not hesitate to express it.

Secondly, ask them: *Are the Bishops of the Church of England Catholic Bishops?* Who has ever heard them called by that name, or would they know themselves if they happened to hear themselves so designated? And yet if the Bishops do not represent the religion of the Church they rule over, who does? The rule of the Catholic Church is described by St. Cyprian to be that "the Church is in the Bishop, and the Bishop in the Church." And what is very much to our point in this matter is, that the more advanced High Church party, better known at present as Ritualists, are the ones who are most eager to claim the name of Catholic for themselves, and to deny it to their Bishops. See, again, their

unreasonableness. They are members of a Church which has Bishops who are not Catholics, and yet they who are under these Bishops, whose clergy are ordained by them and licensed by them, are not afraid to call themselves Catholics.

Ask them a third question : *Are the English Cathedrals Catholic Churches ?* I insist upon this question, because we all know how, in these last few years, there has been a move among some of the Anglican Clergy towards the Catholic ceremonial, and hence their name of Ritualists. But we are not to judge of the religion of a country from the form of worship carried out in a few churches here and there ; but we go to those which are under the authority of the higher powers of the Church, and judge by them. Go into our Cathedrals in Catholic countries, and you cannot mistake the religion that is professed there. And until a Catholic form of worship once more finds its way into the Cathedrals of England, the claim to be called Catholic by those who are under the authorities to whom the Cathedrals at present belong, is again unjust and unreasonable.

Again, ask them : *Are the poor of England Catholics ?* What is meant when we use the term, the Catholic poor ? Does not everyone know that it means that portion of the poor classes which belongs to us ? And yet it is from the poor, more than the upper classes, that you judge of the character, and that you pronounce upon the religion of a country. The rich educated classes can be trained into anything ; and we know very well that amongst them there is, in England, a fashion about religion, just as there is about dress, or any other changeable accidents of society. The poor form the great

bulk of the population, and the English poor are not Catholics. Yet they have quite as full a right to call themselves such, as those aspirants whom we are now considering. But in this matter the poor are simple and unaffected, and they do not aim at anything above them. It is not, in reality, a part of my argument to allude to the well-known failure of the Church of England in influencing the poor towards religion, and yet that *the poor have the Gospel preached to them* was an evidence of the Divine mission of our Blessed Lord, as it is also of His Church. The state of the poor is certainly a testimony against the Church of England, it stands up in judgment against that Church, and is at once a crushing answer to those who belong to it, and yet pretend to say that they are Catholics.

And the last question which you may ask of them is this : *Who calls them Catholics ?* They sometimes, with that timidity, and hesitation, and fear of not being believed which always accompany a statement which is felt to be untrue, call themselves Catholics, as we are now considering in our argument. But who else calls them so ? Do they even call each other so, except when they are thrown upon their defence, and use the term in a Protestant meaning, because it is used under protest against us ? Ask any one of us, whom you might accidentally meet in the streets, or in society, if we are Catholics. Our answer is clear and precise. We are. Ask any of those pretenders to the name the same question, and they can only answer with a compromise, because they know so fully what is meant by the question, and how unsatisfactorily their answer suits it. If, by universal consent and usage, the name is not meant

for them, why do they abuse terms, by forcing them to a meaning which does not belong to them? What universal consent and usage decides for us is this: To be a Catholic, and a Roman Catholic means one and the same thing. No one but a Roman Catholic deserves the name, and, as a fact, no one else can succeed in gaining it.

If, however, the name Catholic has a meaning the very contradictory to that which is attached to it in the Creed of the Apostles, and of Nicæa; if it means being a member of a Church which is broken up into innumerable divisions within itself, and is in separation from every other Church; of which one-half teaches what the other half indignantly rejects and anathematizes; of which some members pretend to admit seven Sacraments, and others, in conformity with their acknowledged formularies, maintain that there are but two; whose constitution is essentially national, and which cannot embrace within its pale men of all nations; whose Bishops are not Catholic, and are not accepted into loving fraternity by the Episcopate of the whole habitable globe; whose Cathedrals have a service and a mode of worship peculiar to themselves, and unrecognized by any other Church in the universe; to whose poor the name of Catholic is never given, and which has been painfully negative in its influence upon the poor; which, when all other nations send gladly their Bishops to an universal meeting of the Pastors of the Church of Christ, stands aloof, unknown, without a place, and is left solitary and shivering without;—if by this is meant Catholic, then the Church of England is pre-eminently Catholic, and may claim the name. But then, words have changed their meaning, and Catholic is exactly the reverse of what it has always

meant, and implies a quality which our Blessed Lord never intended His Church to possess.

Perhaps, my dear brethren, I may seem to be severe because I say this. Truth always seems severe to those who possess it not, and who do not like, therefore, to hear its absence brought home to them. You know that our dearest Lord, meek and gentle as He was, said true things which sounded very harshly in the ears of His persecutors. When He stood bound as a prisoner before the High Priest, and was questioned as to His teaching, and gave an answer regarding the truth of His doctrine, He was struck in the face, and answered, mildly : *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil ; but if well, why strikest thou Me ?* (John xviii. 23.) And if I am only defending the truth, as God knows I am, and sheltering the venerable name of Catholic against profane abuse, bear with me, for it is my duty to uphold the dignity of the Church, which alone is One and Catholic. I do it for your own sakes, for I am protecting your honour ; I do it even for the sake of those who wish to claim a name, which they have not yet learnt to deserve. To those who differ from us, I say in the fulness of my heart : Love the name of Catholic, for it deserves your love. I wish not to deprive you of it, but will gladly share it with you. Take it, and be welcome to it ; but take it on one condition, and it is the only condition on which it can be given to you—take the name, but take the reality with it. Be Catholics—become Catholics—and then glory in calling yourselves Catholics.

May the great event, which is now so close upon us, be the means of opening the eyes of many to the claims made upon them by that Church, which alone shows that

it is One and Catholic, by the very fact of an Œcumenical Council! It is destined in the decrees of God to do great things for His glory, and for the salvation of souls. May it be set up, not for the fall, but for the resurrection of many in Christendom! May it hasten the end so much wished for, and so earnestly prayed for by our dearest Lord! Through this good work may many more be drawn to believe in Him, and be brought into Unity, and thus share in the blessings of which the Church is the minister and dispenser under God! May it contribute towards gathering into one those that are dispersed, and bring them into the One Fold of the One Shepherd! And at the same time that, in its majestic assemblage it will be manifesting to the world an example of Unity, may it prove to all what a blessing it is to have communion and fellowship with devout men of every nation under the sun, and to be, both in name and reality, a Catholic!

LECTURE VII.

AN ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL THE LOUDEST PROTEST AGAINST ACTUAL ERROR.

There are no speeches nor languages where their voices are not heard. Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.—Ps. xviii.

AMONGST the most splendid prophecies in the Old Testament, must be reckoned those which have reference to the universality of the Christian Church. For to those Jews who loved God, and who knew how He deserved to be loved and honoured by all His creatures, it must have been a sad and a bitter thought to see the whole world else rejected, and themselves alone believers in the true God and possessors of His Revelations. The privilege which they possessed they might indeed well value; and many a heart and voice must have entertained with thankfulness and sung forth with joy that saying of their great legislator: *There is no other nation which hath its gods so close to it, as our God is close to us.* (Deut. iv. 7.) But yet, when they remembered two truths — when they remembered that God was the God of the Universe, that *the earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof*, that He deserved to be known and loved by all men; and when they remembered also that every soul was immortal, and that each one of those who was ignorant of God, would have one day to be judged by Him, they might well sigh for better times, when not one nation only, but all peoples

should be brought to the knowledge and service of the God of Israel. Therefore it was that Patriarchs longed for the days which have now arrived; therefore did Abraham, the father of all nations, desire to see the day of Christ, and was glad when he was vouchsafed that sight. Hence those languishing sighs: *Send Him whom Thou art to send. Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth open and bud forth the Saviour.* And Prophets sang of the future days of glory and of accomplished hope. Isaiah, as we have seen in a previous instruction, saw the mountain of the House of God raised on the top of mountains, and all nations flowing unto it. Jeremias, the figure of the Baptist, was made *a Prophet unto the nations*, with the order *to root up, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to build, and to plant.* Ezechiel saw the figure of the four Evangelists in the active discharge of the work commissioned to them. Daniel interpreted the dream of the King of Babylon as representing that future kingdom, which was to have no end upon earth, and was to bring into subjection to itself every quarter of the globe. And the Psalmist, in his beautiful and consoling songs, told repeatedly of the same glorious time of triumph. In the second Psalm, he sings of the Mystery of the Incarnation, and of the subjection of the whole world to the Redeemer. *The Lord hath said to Me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.* And in Psalm xviii., from which I have cited the words which I have selected for the text of this evening's instruction, the same universal submission of the world is commemorated. The Apostles

are foreseen doing their work of preaching in every nation. *There are no speeches nor languages where their voices are not heard. Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.* This is not a human interpretation of these prophetic words, for you know that the Holy Spirit Himself, through St Paul, declares such to be their meaning. (Rom. x. 18.)

I bring these words, with the high sanction attached to them, before you this evening in order to introduce the proposition which we are to consider, namely, that an Œcumenical Council is the loudest protest against actual error. The truth of this proposition follows easily and naturally after that which has immediately preceded it. For if it is the case that an Œcumenical Council is the clearest manifestation of the Unity and Catholicity of the Church, its voice must be the best heard and must reach further than any other. It is but one voice, for it is the expression of One Church: and it is heard all through the world, for it is the expression of the Catholic Church, the Church of all nations. There is no confusion or indistinctness about it, for this is excluded by Unity. There is no weakness about it, for it has the power of an universal chorus. Such a voice is best heard from a Council; for although the Church always speaks decisively and strongly against error, it is in Councils that it has spoken most loudly, and that it has silenced the most exaggerated errors.

The mission of Christianity is a mission against error. Our Blessed Lord declares this in many places of Himself, and the Gospel repeatedly assures us of it. He came into the world as the Light of the world, and the object of this Light was clearly declared by the father of

the Baptist in his canticle, when he sings of the Orient from on high *Who hath visited us, to enlighten them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death.* For as error is darkness, truth is light. The evil spirit is the spirit of darkness and of falsehood, a liar and the father of lies : he brought sin into the world by falsehood. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of light and of truth, and was sent by our Blessed Lord to protect the work of truth for which He Himself was ever labouring. *I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life,* might our dearest Saviour have well said of Himself. And to Pilate He declares the reason of His coming upon earth : *For this I came into the world, that I might give testimony to the truth.* (John xviii. 37.) And therefore every one that opposes His work is declared by St. John to be taking up the cause of error against truth. *Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ?* (1 John ii. 22.) And in spite of all the opposition placed in His way by His enemies, we find our Lord preaching without fear and speaking openly and loudly upon the truths which He had come to communicate to the world. Justifying Himself upon His doctrine before the High Priest, He declares nobly : *I have spoken openly to the world : I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple whither all the Jews resort ; and in secret I have said nothing.* (John xviii. 20.) And though on occasions on which other charges were brought against Him, we read the words : *Jesus was silent ;* it is not the case when He is called upon declare the truth in a question of doctrine, and to make a profession of His Faith, such as would in after-times be required from His followers.

The same is the case in the commission given to the

Apostles : *Go and teach.* What is taught? Not error, but truth. The human mind, under the influence of that *Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world*, cannot give its assent to absolute error. It can only accept it when placed before it under a guise of truth. The tongue indeed can utter what is untrue, and what the mind knows to be untrue, and here is the wickedness of falsehood, which is an outward expression consented to by the soul, of what it inwardly feels and knows to be contrary to truth. It was a hard task that was given to the Apostles to go amongst those who loved darkness rather than light. They were to go as lambs amongst wolves. They were to be persecuted, and to be driven from city to city. But as their Founder and Master had been put to death, because He loved the truth and preached it, they were not to expect less to be done in the dry wood, than had been done in the green. And so in the very beginning of their mission we find them openly and bravely asserting their principle. The Spirit of Truth had come down upon them, and the same was also the Spirit of Fortitude; for Truth is always brave and outspoken. And when they had already begun to gain many to the Faith, and signs and wonders were accompanying them in their mission, the authorities of Jerusalem intermixed persuasion with threats, and begged them no longer *to teach in the Name of Jesus.* But Peter and John answering, said to them : *If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye ; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* (Acts iv. 18.) And the intrepid St. Paul everywhere declares His mission to be that of teaching the truth : his weapons were the word of God,

and the light of the Gospel. His severest denunciations are towards those against whom *the wrath of God is revealed, because they have detained the truth of God in injustice.* (Rom. i. 18.) His warfare was to pull down *every height that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ.* (2 Cor. x. 5.) With such a commission, and so nobly fulfilled, no wonder that the Apostles were all of them also Martyrs; for what means a Martyr, but a witness to the truth?

The work of Christ, continued through the Apostles, was intended to be perpetual. The Apostles were formed into a corporate association, in which vacancies were to be filled up, "with a power to add to its number." For as the labour increased by the spreading of the Faith, workmen were required to gather in the harvest. The work is always the same, and the power of achieving it must also be always the same. The work is the subduing of error, and the power is the preaching of truth. It has been foretold, therefore, in a promise solemnly enregistered, that the gates of Hell, which is the kingdom of error, shall never prevail against the Church, which is the kingdom of Christ.

Is there, then, or is there not, we ask, such a reality upon earth as a Church, *the Church of our Blessed Lord*, and in favour of which He has made so many promises? And if it does exist, what is its mission, except to do His work, for which He founded it, to denounce and fight against error, and everywhere to preach up and spread the truth? The Church meets me everywhere in the Sacred Scriptures. I see it described in those magnificent predictions of the Prophets which I have already

placed before you. I see it again in its formation; and the promise of its future greatness and power is constantly brought forward in the Gospel. Our Blessed Redeemer is inaugurating His work; He is forming and concentrating His forces; He is investing certain ones amongst His followers with peculiar privileges, and endowing them with powers until then never bestowed upon man—powers of teaching all nations with every security against error, powers of ministering followed by super-natural consequences. The work which He establishes, the kingdom which He founds, He calls His Church. He says that He builds it upon a rock, and hell is never to succeed in its efforts against it; He makes its decisions so important, that He declares that those who resist them shall be looked upon as heathens and publicans, cast away by God, and rejected by His people upon earth. He declares of the Ministers of this Church, that He hands over to them that plenitude of power which had been given to Him by His Father, in heaven and on earth, and that whoever heard or despised them was, in very truth and deed, hearing or despising Himself and His Father. He solemnly declares, in the very last words He spoke upon earth, His determination to remain with this Church for ever, even to the consummation of the world; and after His Ascension He fulfils in a striking manner the promise He had made of sending down the Holy Spirit, the bond of union between Himself and His Father, to bind the Church with Himself, and to secure it from all error, even to the end of time. This is what I see running all through the Gospel.

And in the Acts of the Apostles, in which is recorded

the history of the earliest struggles of the infant Church, organised and sent out to its work, I see again the reality of this Church. The Holy Spirit, promised in the Gospel, comes down; and the Apostles, now confirmed in all the gifts and privileges until then in abeyance, receive their faculties and the use of their jurisdiction, and go out to preach the truth in the world. Converts are made, and what is said of them upon their conversion, is that they were added to the Church. Fear in the time of trial, joy in days of success, prayer on occasions of anxiety, watchfulness on the part of Pastors, obedience on the side of the people, all these are recorded as taking place in the Church; and thus, these Acts are in reality nothing but the first annals of the existence of the Church.

And in the inspired epistles, the Church comes before me upon every page. I am told how Christ loved it, and delivered Himself up for it, and chose it for His Spouse, and left it without spot or wrinkle, in order to be worthy of its perpetual and close alliance with Him. I see the great office entrusted to it especially as a protest against error, when it is called *the pillar and ground of the truth*. And I find special praise given to those who had accepted the preaching of the ministers of the Church, *not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God*.

It is brought before me as an article of my Faith in the Apostles' Creed, in which I am told to believe in the Holy Catholic Church. And in order the better to secure me against false pretenders, I find its qualities and marks more especially designated in the Creed of the early Councils, when it is called the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apos-

tolie Church. I see it in existence now, and can no more doubt it, than the existence of the sun which enlightens us throughout the day. I see it both in the persons of those who are happily its members, and who, through its ministry, are working out their way to heaven; and I cannot help seeing it thrust before me, even if I tried to ignore its existence, by the importunate perseverance of the attacks directed against it by those who are, unfortunately for themselves, its enemies and opponents; for I suppose it must be true that men do not, in these practical days, fight against mere imaginary existences, but they do fight resolutely enough against the Church. And so, with all these evidences around me, I again ask, is there or is there not such a reality upon earth as the Church? And what is its mission?

The mission of the Church is the same as that of its holy Founder—it is a mission against error. Those who are against us will, I suppose, agree with us in this statement. Otherwise they stand self-condemned. They think we are in error, and they certainly preach and teach against us; and by this very fact they show that they consider themselves bound in duty to preach against error, and so affirm our proposition, that the Church's mission is against error. But what I must insist upon (listen attentively, my dear brethren, for it is very important) is, that a Church whose mission is against error, must itself be beyond error, and therefore infallible. Give a Church which can err, and which must admit that it can err (unless it asserts its infallibility), and it acknowledges that it is unequal to its mission, and it trembles before its foe. A preacher of such a Church, if he told the whole truth to those who sit under him, would be

bound to say: "Take what I tell you with mistrust and hesitation. I am a minister of a Church which may tell you what is false. And when, in the name of my Church, which has been established as a protest against Popery, I tell that that religion is wrong, I may perhaps be wrong myself, for I am no wiser than my own Church, and we may both err together." If this is an unreasonable way of putting out in full what a member of a fallible Church must mean, wherein does its unreasonableness consist? The Church is either infallible, or it is fallible. If it is fallible, and can err, then the statement which I have just expressed is perfectly undeniable. If it is infallible, then what I want to be admitted, is admitted—namely, that the Church which has to conquer error must itself be stronger than error, and beyond its power, and therefore infallible.

If Almighty God does give to His Church authority to teach, and by teaching, to remove error, He is bound—I speak with all reverence of His holy duty towards His own truth—He is bound to protect it against error, or else it is Himself that is conquered, for His truth is Himself. You will see this, and you will see that I am not irreverent in making this statement, when I ask you, who believe in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, to answer me this question. Can the Scriptures err? I do not say, can those who interpret the Scriptures happen to be wrong in their interpretation? but I say: Can the Scriptures themselves be wrong? You answer, No! positively and indignantly. They cannot do so, for as God speaks through the Scriptures, and they are the word of God, He Himself would be in error, for His word is an expression of His own thoughts. Here then our principle is

asserted : That which Almighty God uses as His own means for conveying His truth, and for removing error, cannot itself be fallible and perhaps in the wrong. Why did the Prophets always speak the truth, and why were they infallible ? Because God spoke through them, as you say in the Nicene Creed, of the Holy Ghost, “ Who spake through the Prophets.” Balaam was willing, apparently, to prophesy falsely ; but he could not do it. In the work of prophecy he was infallible. And when the wicked King Achab tried so unreasonably to force the Prophet Micheas to prophesy otherwise than what God had made known to him, you remember his answer : *As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord shall say to me, that will I speak.* (3 Kings xxii. 14.) Here then our principle is affirmed that the Instrument which Almighty God uses as His means for conveying truth, is equal to its requirement, and does communicate truth without the danger of error. And so the Church which is commissioned upon earth to do this work, *the pillar and ground of the truth*, is necessarily infallible.

The illustrious Fénelon beautifully and strikingly describes the difference between the real and effectual help in his struggle against error, afforded to man in the Catholic Church, and that which is pretended to be given by those who leave the individual to judge for himself. He represents a poor, paralysed man, helpless in his sick bed, in a house which has taken fire. Four or five pretending sympathising friends come running up to him, to give him the alarm, and tell him to rise at once and escape as fast as possible. But a sixth one comes, and raises him gently up, tells him to cling to him, and to have confidence, and that he will soon lay him down

again in a place of safety, and does so.* Which of all these is really his friend? Is it any of those who only increased his fears by their untimely visits, or is it not the one who so truly proved his saviour? So, in the midst of errors which are ever endeavouring to ruin our faith, and thereby our soul, who is it that grants us effective help, and brings peace and confidence to our troubled spirit? Is it they who cry out, *Peace, peace, and there is no peace*; or is it not rather that true and active friend, raised up by Almighty God for the very purpose of guiding and protecting us in the midst of danger? *When thou shalt pass through the waters, I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not cover thee; when thou shalt walk in the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, and the flames shall not burn in thee.* (Isa. xliii. 2.)

Nobly and successfully, certainly, has the Church ever done her duty in behalf of the great cause committed to her. But it is especially in her Councils that she has spoken most loudly, and directed the strongest opposition against error, at whatever time, and under whatever shape it may have appeared. We have seen that when the Apostles even, with their personal infallibility, could not so successfully withstand in their scattered state the attack made by those who were insisting upon what would have implied the insufficiency of the Price paid for souls by the Precious Blood of our Blessed Redeemer, they had recourse to a more effective resistance within their reach, assembled together in Council, and silenced for ever the troublesome opponents that rose up against them. So also, in the

* Fénelon, lettre sur la Religion. Apud Dechamps, L'Infaillibilité et le Concile Général.

Œcumenical Council of Nicæa, against the actual error of the time, which attacked the very Divinity of the only begotten Son of God, the Church spoke out so loudly that its voice is heard distinctly still in the splendored definitions of the Nicene Creed. The Council of Trent did the same; and its decrees and decisions against Protestantism are ever standing as a witness of what the Universal Church in the sixteenth century—the same as had spoken in Nicæa—declared against errors until that time unknown, or, at least, almost completely unuttered.

As truth exists before error, inasmuch as error is but a denial of a previously existing truth, the work of the Church in her Councils has been the affirmation against those who have denied them, of doctrines contained in the deposit placed under the care of the Church at her foundation. Therefore Councils never pretend to define newly-revealed truths, but declare explicitly, as circumstances may demand, doctrines revealed to the Apostles, and treasured up ever since in safe custody. Against those who presume to assert so positively, that the doctrines defined against Protestantism in the Council of Trent, were new in themselves, and before that time unknown and unbelieved, you have this very week had a striking and unanswerable testimony in our favour, in the letter addressed by the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople to the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury.* When invited by the Primate of the English Protestant Church, to accept certain proposals and overtures of intercommunion, the Patriarch, in an answer quite charac-

* See Note A at the end.

teristic, gives his reasons for refusal. Commencing with expressions so complimentary, as to give an assurance that something less complimentary is sure to follow, the Patriarch selects certain articles of Faith, asserted in that strange admixture of truth and heresy, which goes by the name of the Thirty-nine Articles, and declares that whilst they remain as the profession of the belief of the English Church, the proposal made to him is impossible of acceptance. The eternity of the Holy Spirit, in which the Anglican Church agrees with us, and the doctrine regarding the Blessed Eucharist, the number of the Sacraments, Tradition, the Authority of Councils, the Communion of Saints, and the Infallibility of the Church, in all of which the Anglican Church differs from us, are alleged as reasons for denying the orthodoxy of Anglicanism, and for refusing communion with it. But as the Greek Church, on the authority of its Patriarch, agrees with us in these articles which Anglicanism rejects, and in the rejection of which it shows novelty, as the same Patriarch testifies, we can point to this evidence as a clear proof that what the Council of Trent declares to be of faith, are not new doctrines, inasmuch as they are taught and believed by a Church, which has been separated from union with Rome for so many centuries. Observe the great advantage gained by the Church of Rome through the means of this correspondence. In the one point in which the Greek Patriarch differs from us, the English Church admits that we are right. In all the points in which the English Church differs from us, the Greek Patriarch admits that we are right. And so they each admit that we are right, except on the points in which they differ from us. Like the two witnesses who came

forward to give evidence against our Blessed Lord, at the time of His trial, their testimony is not consistent, and by its inconsistency is a strong indirect proof of our orthodoxy, as testified to by the Œcumenical Councils. It would, indeed, be well if the English Church would take the hint so quietly given by the Patriarch, and in their confessions of Faith, would not indulge in accusations of their neighbours.

If it is the case that previous Councils have most loudly protested against existing errors, we may ask whether an Œcumenical Council would have nothing to do now, and whether error is so silent and inactive, as not to require denouncing and subduing. Would that it were so! The numerous occasions on which the Holy Father has had to condemn errors against religion, are a proof that the spirit of evil is as active as ever in going about to seek whom to devour, and that we must be strong in faith in order to resist him. And the Syllabus of errors, drawn up in 1864, classified for the better instruction and caution of the faithful what are the various kinds of attack made now-a-days against the Church. In the tenfold division therein contained, are to be found propositions of absolute Atheism, directed against the Almighty Himself, of Rationalism directed against His Holy Revelation, of Indifferentism against Religion, of Socialism and Secret Societies against the very welfare of the human race; propositions against the Church, against Morality, against Education, against Marriage, against the Sovereign Pontiff and all hierarchical authority. And although the press in this country has most disloyally attacked this noble protest against the spirit of wickedness, we can scarcely conceive that any defender of morality would

dare to affirm deliberately and fully a single one of the propositions condemned, or at least accept the spirit of those who have ventured to express them. But here again Protestantism has shown its old antagonism to the Catholic Church. What Protestantism seems unequal to understand is, that Religion implies opposition to the spirit of the world: that it is its duty to be constantly affirming the supernatural against mere naturalism, and defending Revelation against infidelity. In its attacks upon us it goes hand in hand, and heart and soul in alliance with Rationalism. It proves itself to be nothing but a mere human system, in which outward respectability and standing well with the world, are held out as the highest perfection. To define Protestantism to be Christianity without the Supernatural, would be, perhaps, its truest and most complimentary description.

It is well, probably, that the greater part of the faithful, inasmuch as the responsibility of actively defending the Faith does not devolve upon them, are ignorant of the lengths to which the enemies of the Catholic Church have gone in their hatred against religion. Bishops who have written their reasons for welcoming the present Council, as intended in the designs of Almighty God to provide a more effectual remedy against evils which seem to cry to Heaven for vengeance, have made known to what extremities in their own experience iniquity has advanced. One of these illustrious Prelates, foremost as he has been amongst the defenders of the Church in France, the zealous and vigorous Bishop of Orleans, mentions some amongst the fearful evidences of the progress of Atheism and declared hatred against God and His holy cause. He instances France and Germany,

and does not omit pointing to the well-known increasing infidelity in our own country. He states how here in England the efforts of the lower classes to place themselves above those whom Providence has raised over them, are nothing more than a logical sequence of the denial of the principle of authority. He gives an instance how the rejection of religion implies the abandonment of that love for our neighbour, which must enter as an element into the well-being of society. When some time ago, a fearful accident occurred at Metz, in the explosion of the powder magazines in the neighbourhood, whereby many families were plunged into the severest affliction, and subscriptions were being organized to afford relief, just because the word charity was used in the appeal made in behalf of the sufferers, an influential assembly of infidels refused to admit the appeal, on this ground—that charity was a Catholic virtue, and was not of democratic origin.* You can scarcely believe the truth of this statement, and it is certainly hard to believe to what lengths men will go, when once they set up in hatred against God. You know the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and how the Apostle shows the enormities perpetrated by those heathen philosophers, *who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever more: Amen.* Such is the tendency of the present day, and it is this wicked tendency which the Catholic Church is determined to withstand.

And not the duty of individual to individual, but of

* Mgr. Dupanloup, *Lettre sur le futur Concile*, p. 27.

nation to nation, is equally ignored in these revolutionary times. Not justice, but superior strength is allowed to prevail. Weaker states are permitted to be crushed by more powerful ones, without an act of sympathy or assistance from those who ought to protest against such usurpation. The principle of non-intervention is fallen back upon, when it is convenient to cite it, but shamefully despised, when the convenience is on the other side. So great a want is there of the admission of principles of justice between nation and nation, that even a Protestant society has sent an appeal* to Rome, begging the Holy Father in the Œcumenical Council to use his influence in restoring the Law of Nations, and inspiring between the kingdoms of the world a mutual confidence which is now so utterly lost. How ungenerous has been the outcry against our Holy Father, the Pope, because he has stood alone in his noble declaration that he *cannot* subvert laws of eternal justice, and give up at the bidding of a disgraceful democracy, the rights which he has inherited, and which he is bound to transmit to those who succeed him.

Then, there is the matter of education, in which you, parents, are bound to be interested. We Catholics in England are now placed upon our defence, and are obliged to use our influence against the first introduction of a system of training up children without Religion. Propositions approving of the total absence of religious teaching in the schools of the young, have been condemned by the voice and authority of the Holy Father in that Syllabus which is so unpopular among the enemies of

* See note B at the end.

the Church ; and this most important matter of education has been declared to be one of the motives which have prompted the calling together of the Council. And we may well hope, that when the Bishops of the Church from every quarter of the globe will have given their experience, and will have learnt from one another, under the presidency of the Holy Spirit of Wisdom, the necessity of a firm and organised resistance against the attempt to bring up the rising generation in ignorance of the most necessary truth, which assures them that it can avail them nothing to gain the whole world, if they come to suffer the loss of their souls,—if the protest already made by the Holy Father be not loud enough, it must make itself heard when it will be taken up in chorus by the eight hundred Bishops, who will be gathered around him in the Vatican.

I have often felt that one of the most fear-inspiring chapters in the whole of the Sacred Scripture is the thirty-third of the Prophet Ezechiel. It does not, my dear brethren, concern each one of you in its most direct application, but it most fully and deeply concerns the Pastors of the Church. It tells the Watchman, appointed by Almighty God over His people, what is his duty, and the weight of his responsibility. If, when the Watchman sees evil coming upon the land, he calls out loudly, and raises an alarm, they who will not take the warning, but allow themselves to be injured, must themselves alone bear the penalty of their heedlessness. But if, when he sees the evil, he does not call out, but allows it to produce its effect, he will have to answer for the consequence ; and if any one perish, the Almighty declares : *I will require his blood at the hand of the Watch-*

man. None can say that our present venerable Holy Father has been unwatchful, or has neglected to speak out boldly and loudly, when necessity has required it. I well remember, and many of you may remember the same, how, at the beginning of his Pontificate, which, by the blessing of God, and for the good of the Church, has been extended to so great a length, when the Secret Societies, his especial enemies, were endeavouring most earnestly to ruin the principles and morals of the young, he called aloud, with a plaintive voice which made itself heard in every country of the globe: "They are taking away from me all my young men." And it was in a spirit of fidelity to his duty as Watchman, and of love for the young, that he spoke out again so loudly in the condemnations pronounced five years ago against the iniquitous system of education encouraged in so many quarters. And when now, towards the end of his career, he sees evils menacing the whole world, and the powers of the earth ungratefully ranged against him, who has stood almost alone in opposing the revolutionary spirit of the day, and who has had the manliness to resist unjust demands so weakly conceded by others, he again calls out loudly, and raises the alarm. Despoiled of four-fifths of his provinces, and suffering therefrom a degree of martyrdom at the hand of his oppressors, his spirit is still equal to the occasion, and he shows it in that noble effort he has so successfully made, in summoning around him the Episcopate of the world. May all his wishes be granted! May the Lord hear him in the day of his triumph, as He has heard him in the day of tribulation, and may the Name of the God of Jacob protect him! May his warning voice be heard in time, and may

all men learn to acknowledge who has been their best friend! And to end, as the Prophet ends his chapter of warning: *When that which was foretold shall come to pass (for behold, it is coming), then shall they know that a Prophet hath been amongst them.*

LECTURE VIII.

AN ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOSPEL AGAINST THE WORLD.

If the world hate you, know that it hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. . . . In the world you shall have distress ; but have confidence, I have overcome the world.—JOHN xv. 18. xvi. 33.

You know the disposition of our dear Lord : how meek He was, how humble and forgiving ; and how true was the character given of Him by St. Peter : *Who when He was reviled, did not revile ; when He suffered, He threatened not, but delivered Himself to him who judged Him unjustly.* (1 Peter ii. 23.) Well did St. John Baptist call Him the Lamb of God, a name long before given to Him in prophecy, when it was said that He was to be *led as a sheep to the slaughter, and be dumb as a lamb before his shearers, not opening his mouth* (Isaiah liii. 7) ; and a name loved and perpetuated in the Church, when she addresses Him as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. The thoughts of His Sacred Heart ; the words which He has uttered and has left to be recorded ; the mode of life, humble and simple, which He adopted ; His meekness under injuries ; His patience under persecution ; His obedience *unto death, even to the death of the Cross*, all combine in fixing His character as that of the gentlest and most loving one, that has ever trodden this poor earth of ours. And yet there are

severe sayings of His that are enregistered in the Gospel, and sayings which come upon us with the greater appearance of severity, because they stand out in such marked contrast to every other word which He has spoken. We do not feel severity so much from those who are always severe: we expect it, and we are prepared to bear it. But to meet with severity at the hands of one who is always mild and gentle, strikes us the more strongly, and fills us with alarm, and awakens within us a reflection upon the act which may have occasioned it. Among the severe sayings of our dear Lord are those which He has pronounced so strongly and positively against the world. He came to bestow blessings upon all; yet He says: *Woe to the world*. He came to give peace to all, for He was the Prince of Peace; yet He declares war against the world, and will have no peace and friendship with it; for it is of the world He is speaking when He says: *I have not come to send peace, but the sword*. He came to pray for all, and intended to be ever making before the throne of His Father that intercession which is so powerful to save, yet He goes so far as to exclude the world from His prayer; for He even does not hesitate to say these, perhaps the severest words He ever uttered: *I pray not for the world*. (John xvii. 19.) Alas! my dear brethren! what is to come of those whom our most merciful and loving Lord condemns? against whom He declares a constant war and an implacable aversion; and of whom He so utterly despairs, that He will not even pray for them? And yet all this is true; you read it in the Gospel.

And he infuses the very same spirit into the Apostles. He wishes them to imitate His character, to learn of Him

because He was meek and humble of heart. He orders gentleness under rebuke; patience under persecution; forgiveness of injuries, praying for those who afflicted them, and blessing those who spoke evil against them; but with all this, no compromise nor peace with the world. They were not to attempt to serve him and the world at the same time; the two masters demanded different kinds of homage, and they must make up their minds to love One and hate the other. You see this Apostolical spirit manifested in the noble-minded St. Paul. He makes himself all to all—to Greek or barbarian, to Jew or Gentile, he is equally a minister—and is willing even to become an anathema for his brethren. But yet what a bold attitude of defiance does he not assume when he is confronted with the world! *Far be it for me to glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.* (Gal. vi. 14.) This is the profession of faith and determination with which the glorious Apostle started out to accomplish the important work for which Almighty God had made him *a vessel of election*. He had a twofold work before him: he had to destroy the influence of the world over himself, and he had to teach the Name and love of Jesus, and thus to destroy the influence of the world over others also. And it was necessary that he should go forth nerved and armed for his labour; that he should enter upon it with spirit; that he should look upon the world as an enemy, which he was determined to subdue; and consequently that he should act upon a principle opposed to the spirit of the world; and that as the world was uncompromising in its hatred to him, so should he make no over-

tures to it, but pursue it and struggle with it even to the death.

And to the Church is given the same commission. In this also it is Apostolical: it must oppose the world as the Apostles did. It must enforce maxims, and teach lessons and practices contrary to the spirit and ways of the world. It must make up its mind to be hated by the world, and it must hate it heartily in return. There is no fear of transgressing charity here. The law of charity enforces love to God and our neighbour, but the world holds no place in either of these categories. The Church must make up its mind also to suffer at the hands of the world, but must be patient and persevering under these sufferings. It must not be surprised if such sufferings come, but rather if they do not come; for it is written: *In the world you shall suffer distress*; and again: *They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God; but these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them.* (John xvi. 2, 4.) Not patient only must the Church be under its sufferings, but cheerful, and confident of its ultimate victory, because He is fighting on the side of the Church, Who says: *Have confidence, I have overcome the world.* To be hated by the world, but to be hated because of our Lord, and in company with Him, is not a humiliation: it is the Church's glory. Hence the Church has two things to plant in the midst of the world: it has to plant the Gospel, and side by side with the Gospel, it has to plant the Cross: that Cross always a scandal, and a stumbling-block, and foolishness in the eyes of the world. The Gospel is the

lesson of truth : the Cross is the lesson of opposition to the world.

When, then, I say, as I have to shew you this evening, that an Œcumenical Council is the representative of the Gospel against the world, you can well understand that if such a Council represents the Church, it must be in antagonism with the world, and we must expect to find the world arrayed in opposition to it. But let us understand, as clearly as we can, what is meant by the world, in the sense in which it is so much censured and anathematized by our Blessed Lord. It must have a meaning, and it must be important for us to know its meaning, lest, perchance, it might be that we are allowing ourselves to a greater or a less degree to be under its influence, to be in friendship with it, and therefore to be against our Lord, against the Gospel, and against the Church.

By the world, then, in the first place, we do not mean this earth of ours, the place of man's habitation, and the scene of his labours whilst he is struggling for eternity. For although we constantly use the word "world" to represent the "*orbis terrarum*," the habitable globe, of course it is not in that sense that the Sacred Scriptures hold it up as an object of our hatred. It has, indeed, by the fall of our first parents, been changed into a vale of tears, but yet its very sorrows have been sanctified by Him, who came from Heaven to dwell upon it, and has chosen it as His constant dwelling-place in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar. So far the world is irresponsible, and is the abode of the just and the unjust, upon both of whom the sun shines and the rain falls without any partiality. Nor again, does the world mean the whole of the human race, responsible as it is. For in this meaning it

is an object of love to God, of Whom our dear Lord Himself has said : *God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son* for its redemption. (John iii. 16.) And in this sense the world is an object of our love also, for we are bound to love our neighbour as ourselves, and all mankind enters into this glorious fraternity. In neither of these meanings, therefore, is the world under the censure of God and His Church.

But there is a sense in which the world is spoken of in the inspired language of Holy Writ, as a special enemy of God and of the soul of man. It is an enemy so positively to be declared by Almighty God to be against Him, that when we become His children in Holy Baptism, we bind ourselves by oath to renounce it. Of each of us, when that first of the Sacraments was administered to us, was asked the question—Dost thou renounce Satan, with all his works, and all his pomps? And we promised that renunciation as the condition of our admission into the Church. By the pomps of Satan we mean the world and all its maxims. And this we have repeated in the days of our full consciousness, as often as we have ratified the promises made in our name in those early days, and have declared that “we renounce the Devil with all his works, the world with all its pomps, and the flesh with all its temptations.” And it is of this world, with all its riches, and honours, and pleasures, of which our Blessed Saviour speaks when He contrasts it with the value of the human soul, and says : *What can it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* It is upon the world in this sense that our dearest Lord pronounces a woe, when He says : *Woe to the world, because of scandals.* (Matt. xviii. 27.) It is against this He has de-

clared a perpetual and a vigorous war; it is for this He will not pray, for it is past praying for. It is of this He says that there is in it a quality which prevents the Holy Spirit from descending upon it: *The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive.* (John xiv. 17.) Of it He also says that the devil is *the prince of this world.* (John xii. 31.) This is the world which *did not know Him* when He came upon earth. This, He foretold, would always hate the Church, as it had hated Him, and would try to withstand its progress, as it had opposed His.

And it is of this world, in its bad and odious sense, that Apostles spoke also, in such strict harmony with the spirit of their holy Founder. This was crucified to St. Paul, and he to it. Of this St. Peter says that it is our duty to *fly from the pollutions of this world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, lest we be entangled and overcome.* (2 Pet. ii. 20.) And St. James: *The friendship of this world is enmity with God.* (James iv. 4.) And against this, our own patron, St. John, is ever railing; for, as the special lover of our Lord, he must have been the special hater of the world; and so he says: *Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world.* (1 John ii. 15, 16.)

The world, in this condemned sense, means the society of those, who are regulated by maxims, principles, and motives which are against God, Religion, the Gospel, and the Church; who prefer temporal things to eternal; who

are sensual, proud, self-seeking, self-indulgent, self-willed; who refuse everything like self-denial; who are under the influence, and constitute the influence, of human respect; who fear men rather than God; who are given up to the desires of their heart, and, as St. Paul says, *change the truth of God into a lie, and worship the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore. Amen.* Its great aim and its great sin is to make us live and labour for, it rather than for eternity and for Him who made us. It is joined in an unholy alliance with the devil and the flesh; and has such power that at times it seems to be triumphing over God Himself, and to be bringing His work to destruction. It persecuted the Prophets, and all the just, from the time of Abel down to the time that it shed a Blood which cried out more efficiently than his. It legislates against the kingdom of God, and its kings and princes have often stood up against the Lord, and against His Anointed One. It has its hour, but it is an hour of darkness; and yet it seems to be gaining ground at such a time, and to be achieving a victory over God. The world seemed to conquer, and it boasted proudly of its conquest, when it crucified our Blessed Redeemer. It seemed to conquer when it put Stephen and the Apostles to death. It seemed to conquer, when for three centuries it was lording it over Christianity, and dividing epochs of history into its various periods of persecution. And though it has to yield at last when Almighty God shows His power, and a glorious time of Resurrection comes upon the Church, yet it fights again afterwards, and will continue fighting even to the end. If such a world existed in the days of Christ and the Apostles, certainly it exists now; and if the Church had a hard

battle to fight then, it is not, assuredly, its time of peace now.

The title which is given to the Church upon earth describes its attitude with regard to the world: it is a Church Militant. *Our wrestling*, says St. Paul, referring to our time as well as to his own, *is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirit of wickedness in the high places.* (Eph. vi. 12.) The powers which the world uses are those which concern time and this world, not eternity. Hence it holds out riches and temporal comforts and advantages which are associated with riches. It has all the influence which comes from that great and telling argument of human respect. Nor has it ever hesitated to have recourse to the mode of persecution which it can best adopt, as being most in harmony with the spirit of the time. Certainly, the world has not ceased to be a persecutor now-a-days. Persecution need not consist in the infliction of physical suffering: there is also a moral and social kind of persecution; and it is in this that the world proves itself to be at present so well practised. There is not about this kind of attack upon the Church the openness and honesty, if we may say so, of the old form of persecution; it is still none the less painful; but for the comfort of those who have to undergo it, we must add, it is also none the less meritorious. Have converts nothing to suffer now-a-days? When friendships are broken asunder because one person follows his conscience in embracing the faith: when parents turn their children from their home, or visit them with such constant taunts as to make that dwelling-place cease to be like home, is there nothing painful

or trying herein? Never were some of the prophetic declarations of our Blessed Lord more true than in these days of pretended liberty; for He has said: *I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and a man's enemies shall be they of his household.* (Matt. x. 35, 36.) People are sometimes astonished, and try to find a reason for this unnatural treatment; but I think there is a clue to it here, when we remember that those who follow God and His Holy Gospel must *in the world suffer distress.*

Then, again, look at the morality of the world, and at its standard of perfection in virtue. Does it affirm a single one of the Beatitudes? Poverty, meekness, humility, mercifulness, patience under reproaches, purity of heart, are certainly not praised in the world; but the Church is the rather censured and looked down upon, because she inculcates all these habits, and preaches them up as constituents of the true Christian character. Temporal success and prosperity are held out by the world, as a proof and as the reward of perfection. And so we hear attempts made to show the advantage in these respects of countries that are not Catholic over those that are so. Babylon most probably made the same boast against Jerusalem. You remember when our Lord was tempted in the desert, how the wicked spirit, daring even to approach the Son of God, offered Him the reward of temporal glory and riches, if He would but fall down and adore him. This may give us some idea of the reward given to those who adore something else rather than God: it tells us of the power of the devil over the world, as he

pretends to be able to give away *all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them*. The world, indeed, has never loved them, who have given up its tempting offers, and have answered it: *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*.

Another way in which the world fights against the Gospel and the Church, is in its misrepresentation of the doctrines of the Church. We are oftentimes obliged to declare that there are two kinds of Catholics—there are those who exist in reality, who follow the teaching of the Catholic Church, approach to her Sacraments, practise her lessons, and under her guidance are working out their way to heaven. And there is another kind, but it is purely imaginary. It exists in the minds of those who have drawn upon their imagination for everything that is false and worthy of condemnation, and attribute the possession of all these undesirable qualities to something that they call the Catholic Church. Whether such a Church exists anywhere, we know not; but, assuredly, when we are described by those who are opposed to us, and have a statement of our doctrines laid before us by them, we simply know not ourselves from the description that is given. And, therefore, all converts know how utterly different they have found the true and real Catholic Church to be from what it had been pictured to them before their conversion. And we, upon whom so constantly devolves the happy work of instructing converts, know what a considerable amount of time and patience is required in removing the shamefully false impressions, which previous prejudice and misrepresentation had made upon them. When our Blessed Lord was being tried before His judges, we know how much false testimony was brought

against Him. He forewarned His followers that the same would be done in their case, and He blessed them for the share they were to have in this feature of His sufferings. *Blessed are ye, when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.* (Matt. v. 11.) And so it is that we are constantly thrown upon the defensive in our explanation of Catholic faith and practice. Like the early Christian writers, we are obliged in our turn also to be apologists, and are over and over again employed in doing nothing else but answering objections, of which ignorance sometimes, but misrepresentation more frequently, has been the source.

As the Church is upon earth the kingdom of the supernatural, here is another way in which the world places itself in antagonism against her. It is by the denial of the supernatural. Well has St. Paul said: *The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand.* (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Unless the doctrines of the Church, and her very existence were supernatural, she never could have survived the natural obstacles put in her way from the time of her first foundation down to the present day. And this ought to be a sufficient point to urge with those who profess to believe in Christianity, and yet make especial objections to Catholicity, because it does not stoop down so low as to pretend to give nothing but natural reasons for deeply sacred and mysterious doctrines. Rationalism joins hand-in-hand with naturalism in its opposition to the Church, as we know from constant experience, and from the condemnation pronounced by

the Church against their combined assertions. Among the first of the propositions condemned in the Syllabus to which we have already referred more than once, and probably among those to be condemned by the Council, is this: "Human reason, without any regard to God, is the sole arbiter of truth and falsehood, of good and evil; it is its own law to itself, and suffices by its natural force to secure the welfare of men, and of nations."* And thus, when the world calls upon the Catholic Church to answer its questions, it commences with the word, How? How can man forgive sin? How can the Body of our Blessed Lord be really present in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar? And in its protests against having any spiritual authority exercised over it, the world teaches its servants to say: "I am not going to be dictated to by Pope, or Church, or Council. I have my own reason to guide me. I have my private judgment, which I will submit to no ruler. I have my liberty, which I prize, and which I will defend against one that claims to exercise dominion over my soul. This is the nineteenth century, and instead of the Church leading us, as it pretended to do in the dark ages, we must now compel the Church to follow the progress of the world, and to reconcile itself with modern civilisation." This all sounds very grand and bold, my dear brethren, but, remember, it is the world that says it. It is very unlike the saying of Him who declared of Himself: *I have come, not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me*; and of His followers: *Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Persevere in this, and you will

* Syllabus, attached to the Brief: *Quantà Curâ*.—Prop. 3.

be lost. You will be keeping yourself under the patronage of the world and at enmity with God. You cannot serve both, and pretend to look upon both of them as your masters. You will be past praying for, even by our most merciful and loving Saviour, for He prays not for the world. And then what is to become of you in eternity, when time and the world will be no more?

The world, too, in its contest with the Church, is accustomed to take a high tone, and to be pretending to boast of its victories. And yet what are they? and how lasting are they? If it had been the case that some of those leading organs of the Press which in these days undertake to lay down laws for the whole universe, and to lead public opinion, had existed in the days in which our Blessed Lord was living and labouring upon earth, we can well imagine how they would have criticised and condemned His mode of life, because it was so opposed to the ways of the world. And we can well imagine what a grand and telling leading article would have been written in the chief periodical in Jerusalem, had there been the convenience of publishing such productions in those days, when the great event had been consummated on Calvary. On that Holy Saturday morning, the day after *the* Good Friday, men might have been seen in the public places in that unfaithful city, comparing their remarks, and asking each other whether they had read what their chief record had stated regarding the event of the previous day: how He Who had been pretending to go against the spirit and progress of the time, and to establish a new system amongst them, had been effectually conquered and silenced. There was but one man of independent spirit, they would have added, among all

His followers, who was determined not to be dictated to, and his name was Judas. For the world always praises up traitors against the Church; and if it can only find any one who is bound by sacred obligations and by honourable ties to duty, to break through those ties, and to violate against the Church what it would visit with the severest censure if violated against itself, such an one is praised by the world, and is held up as an example to be admired and imitated. Such is the attitude of the world against the Church. Meanwhile, what does the Church do against the world?

The Church is the kingdom of God upon earth, and has for its mission to do battle against the world. There is a triple alliance upon both sides. The Devil, the World, and the Flesh, are opposed by the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the Gospel. The Holy Spirit of Truth is especially opposed to the wicked spirit, the father of lies; the Church is most directly opposed to the world, with all its vanities and false maxims; the Gospel, with its lessons of self-denial, takes its stand in direct opposition to the flesh, with its sensual and self-indulgent principles. And the warfare which the Holy Alliance desires to wage against its enemies is an open warfare. The works of the Holy Spirit are those of light; the works of the opposite side are secret and the works of darkness. What a contrast, therefore, do you not find presented between the conduct of the world, with its secret societies, which are the curse of the present age, and the glorious bearing of the Church assembled in Council!

One fact which the Church manifests by the attitude she thus assumes is, that she is not afraid of the world,

and why should she? *If God be for us, who is against us?* was St. Paul's noble maxim, and it is ever the Church's maxim also. And God is for her—the Holy Spirit is in alliance with her, and surely there can be no reason for her to fear. Our Blessed Lord and His Apostles never feared the world. He was meek and patient under its attacks, but He was resolute at the same time. He conquered the world, and therefore He says to us, *Have confidence*. Read in the tenth chapter of St. Matthew the instruction He gives, in what, at the very beginning of these instructions, I said might be called the first Œcumenical Council, held by Himself with His chosen twelve. He is sending them out upon their work, hard and unpromising as it may have seemed at the time, to the yet untutored and untrained labourers who were to undertake it; and though He teaches them to manifest everywhere simplicity, mercifulness, a spirit of peace and patience under suffering, yet fear He will not hear of. *Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors and before kings for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the gentiles. . . And you shall be hated by all men for My Name's sake. Fear them not. That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light. Fear not them that kill the body, and are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him that can destroy both body and soul into hell.* Thus was a spirit of fortitude infused into the Church at its very foundation, before the same gift was sacramentally confirmed on the day of Pentecost. The bold and open position taken by the

Church in an Œcumenical Council, is the most outspoken declaration, that she fears not the world, but is quite ready for her contest against it.

In fighting against the world it is not against mankind; it is not against society that the Church is combating. Nay, it is for the benefit of men, and for the welfare of society. The Holy Father declares that he fears for society more than for the Church, in the attacks that are made against peace and order. The Church cannot be conquered, but society may be ruined. The Church can have trials, and may seem to be in danger, just as the Apostles felt themselves in danger when a storm arose and Jesus was asleep in the boat. But He Who seems to be sleeping, when enemies are active and watching, is at once aroused by the call of prayer, and after the storm a great calm ensues. But it is not always the same with society. It has been ruined at times by the diseases which have ravaged within, and it requires a helper external to itself to resuscitate it from its ruins. And so the Church wishes again to save society from the evils which are threatening, and which can only be averted by some power stronger than nature; and that is the power which is exercised by Almighty God through the Church. The Holy Father and the Church over which he presides, certainly have had hard trials of late at the hands of the world. We have seen the successor of St. Peter for a time an exile from his dominions; we have seen the greater part of his fair provinces robbed away from him; churches have been plundered; religious houses suppressed, and their members turned out upon the bleak and unsympathizing world; infidel productions, having for their theme and motive the undermining of the

radical principles of religious belief have been encouraged and spread abroad among the people; morality has been reduced to a low and a sinking level; the education of the young has been tampered with, and an attempt made—too successfully—to eliminate the religious element from the training of the young; principles of socialism, which have for their object the destruction of that difference in classes which a wise Providence has ordained, and which is essential to society—all this has been going on, and is going on. The Holy Father does not, as he sees these evils, remain silent and inactive; but he speaks out openly, and calls for the friends of God and Religion to gather about him, and thus to show who is on the side of God and who is against Him. From all he asks for an open declaration; and with all the vigour and earnestness of Elias, he cries out for a clear profession of principle from every one: *How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.* (3 Kings xviii. 21.)

He wants comfort and encouragement. He wants his fellow-defenders to cluster around him. It ought not to be allowed for him to say, as the Prophet foretold our dear Lord in His Passion would have to say, as He indeed had reason to say: *I looked about, and there was none to help; I sought, and there was none to give aid.* (Isaias lxiii. 5.) And therefore the Bishops, who are the sharers of his solicitude, run with instinctive sympathy to him, and from all sides rally around him. They offer the assistance which it is in their power to extend to him, and, with a common faith and hope, join gladly in the common struggle. And you, my dear brethren, want the protection which is thus afforded you. You

may not yet be aware of the fulness of the danger which is upon you. Children are sometimes sleeping in confidence, when parents' hearts are watching in sorrow and anxiety; for there is a danger lurking of which they are not aware who have not the duty of watching, and it is only by this watchfulness that it is averted. Others have felt evils which it may be your turn to feel also at some future time, and a future, perhaps, which is not very remote. May it please God in His great mercy to turn it away! And if He does so, it will be because the watchman has given the alarm, and men have thus been placed upon their guard.

So effectual, indeed, is the warning and security afforded by the Church in this summoning together the chief Prelates of the Church, that the world meets with discomfiture by the very fact of its nefarious projects being brought to light. It is not the Church that fears the world, but the world that fears the Church; and it shows its fear in the impotent attacks it is making upon the Council. It pretends to despise the Council, but it cannot leave it alone; it cannot be silent about it. If the Council can do nothing, and is only a harmless display of the weakness of the Church, why cannot the world allow it to proceed in its work, unnoticed and uncriticised? The temporal rulers of Jerusalem, who had the means, which they availed themselves of cruelly enough, of inflicting suffering and imprisonment upon the Apostles, were in their hearts afraid of these same Apostles; and, therefore, we find them having recourse to secret and underhand means to bribe them into silence. And they beg them quietly, and in a pretended guise of friendship and confidence, not to preach

any more in a Name which had shown itself so powerful. But they were little prepared for the answer, now-a-days but too well known: *Non possumus. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* (Acts iv. 20.) And so the battle is going on. It is not the Church which is going to compromise now. It is quite ready to suffer, for that is its portion here below; but it is not ready to yield, for that is not its portion either here or hereafter.

In the seventh chapter of the Book of Daniel, the Prophet tells how he saw thrones arranged, and the Ancient of days seated in peace and dignity, whilst kingdom after kingdom was brought to ruin. So is it that Almighty God waits in patience whilst *nations rage, and people meditate vain things* against Him, whilst kings stand up and princes plot together against the Lord and His Anointed. He will gain His own at last, in spite of all that are arrayed against Him. He that dwelleth in the heavens will laugh at them, and the Lord will treat them with scorn. In one of two ways will God assuredly subdue every individual soul, for after all they are individuals that are presuming to withstand their own Creator. He will conquer them, either by His goodness or His justice. He prefers the former, and offers it; but if it is refused, He brings the latter into exercise, and from that no man can escape. It is for us to pray that mercy may exalt itself above justice, and that souls which have been bought at so great a Price, may see their own value, and consent to be saved. And it is for the Church to labour whilst we are praying, and in the voice of warning which she will issue from the Council of her Fathers, it will be hers to make known the alternative which awaits each

soul ; forgiveness and reconciliation with God, if any will submit, and seek for it in the acceptable time which still remains for them ; but otherwise—*Perdition is thy own, O Israel!*

When, then, we see the conflict that is going on between the world and the Church of God, we can have no difficulty in understanding why our good and merciful Saviour so much hated and so severely condemned the world. The words which He spoke against the world were uttered by Him eighteen hundred years ago, but it was not of the world only as existing then that He declared such evil, but He looked forward also into the future, and saw the long and continued contest that was to be ever going on against His own dearest work. He saw the glory of His Father constantly being diminished by the influence of the world, and well demanding, therefore, that those who loved that glory should try to counteract that influence, and labour for the greater glory of God. He saw the success of His own cause impeded by the opposition ever thrown in its way by the obstinate perseverance of the world. He saw souls being lost through the power of the world, and because He loved souls so dearly, therefore did He the more bitterly hate and blame the world. No wonder, when He saw and felt all this, that His Sacred Heart broke in Gethsemani, and that He felt such desolation and sorrow throughout His Passion ! But, notwithstanding all this, He overcame the world. He overcame it by His teaching ; He overcame it by His sufferings and death ; and He displayed His victory in the glory of His Resurrection. And the Church, too, overcomes the world : *This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our Faith.* The noble assemblage of the

defenders of the Church in their Council will show how the Church is still filled with Faith, confidence, and love. It will prove that the ancient spirit is not yet crushed out, but that that Church, which has hitherto been able to bear up under every trial, is destined to stand unconquered to the end. For the Church cannot be conquered, more than God Himself can be conquered by the enemies who dare to oppose even Him. Even against God there seem to be moments, now and then, when there is a triumph of the spirit of evil, when His glory is tarnished, and His cause seems not to bear promise of success. It is the world's hour, an hour of darkness. It is the time of the Passion. But the Passion runs its course, and its Resurrection follows. The struggle has been between the world and the truth; and, regarding both of these, declarations have been written for our instruction and our comfort. The one is: *The fashion of this world passeth away.* And the other: *The Truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.*

LECTURE IX.

THE EVE OF THE COUNCIL. THE WORK OF PREPARATION.

Stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high.—LUKE
xxiv. 49.

THAT was a most eventful epoch in the career of the Apostles, which witnessed the withdrawal from amongst them of the visible presence of their dearest Lord and Master. Whilst He was with them, He was everything to them. He had called them to His service, and had so attracted them that they were glad to give up all things in order to follow Him. He had instructed them in the Mysteries of His kingdom, and had spoken openly to them, whilst to others He spoke in parables, and in a less distinct manner. He had invested them with high powers, and had made them partakers of that plenitude of authority which He Himself, as Founder of the Church, had received from His Father. All power had been given to Him in heaven and on earth, and the same He gave to them. For three years, which was the period of His ministry, they were constantly with Him: they followed Him from town to town; and oftentimes, in company with Him, retired from all active work to rest a while, and to recruit themselves with new strength and grace for further labours. But He frequently reminded them that He would be with them visibly only for a short time, and that when He had consummated the work which had been appointed to Him He would leave them and return

to His Father. And the time of parting at last came. It was not the time of His Passion ; for He was to return after that, and converse with them again. You may remember how He said to them : *A little time, and you shall not see Me : and again a little time and you shall see Me, because I return to My Father.* The time in which they were not to see Him, was the period which intervened between His Passion and His Resurrection. And the time in which they were to see Him, was the period between His Resurrection and His Ascension, and then He was to go to His Father. And at His Ascension He did go to His Father, and they were to see Him no more. Never did a friend to a friend, or a parent to his children speak more affectionately, or give more solid comfort at separating, than He did when separating Himself from His Apostles. And bravely and joyfully did the Apostles bear the separation. And after they had seen Him start from Mount Olivet upon His journey to Heaven, *they returned into Jerusalem with great joy.* (Luke xxiv. 52.) Why did they rejoice, and how could they rejoice after such a parting ? It was because they were full of faith, and of hope, and of love. There was no selfishness about them, and therefore they rejoiced. They thought not about themselves, or there might have been much reason for sorrow at their state of desolation. Christ, the light of their eyes, had been taken from them. And they thought of Him and of His cause. They remembered what sacrifices He had made for that cause, and they were ready to make the same. And, therefore, they went back into Jerusalem, determined to enter upon their work with spirit, and to prepare for it *with a great heart and a willing soul.* (2 Mac. i. 3.)

Their Blessed Lord had provided that their work was not to come suddenly upon them. They were to have time for preparation. An immense help was promised to them, with which they were to be strong enough for their task, and were sure of success. They were to go back from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem, and were to wait patiently in prayer until the promise was fulfilled. Weak and unready for their gigantic labour as they had proved themselves up to that time, something was to happen to them, which was totally to transform them. *Stay you in the city*, our dear Lord said to them, *until you be endued with power from on high*. And they did so. They remained in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus; and you know how their obedience, and prayer, and expectation were rewarded. The glory of Pentecost is never to be forgotten; and the power which upon that day came down upon the Church has never been lost, but as it supported the Apostles, so has it continued to support all that have succeeded to their labours, and will continue to support all, even to the end of time.

We are now close upon the eve of the Council, and every Catholic heart is feeling itself to be drawn towards that glorious assemblage of the Church, in which, in the person of our respective Prelates, each one of us will find himself to be present in some measure. We feel to be almost in exile, in not being bodily present to share in the glory of such a work. And just as the Prophet Daniel, in the days of his absence from Jerusalem and the Temple which he loved so well, used, in all his prayers to turn himself in the direction of that Temple, in order to pray with the greater love and fervour, so are we inclined, although with the Blessed Sacrament in our

own beautiful Church, we have all that we can really desire, to turn ourselves in the direction of the favoured city, which the Holy Spirit is so soon to visit with His lights and graces, and then to make known our petitions to our God.

And as we imagine ourselves to be staying in that city, which, in the Christian world, is *the* city, as was Jerusalem the city favoured and exalted in the olden time, we feel ourselves buoyed up with hope, and, with a kind of instinct, enter into the work of preparation. Every important work requires preparation. As the wise man tells us that to commence prayer without preparation, is acting like a man who is tempting God, so do we see the necessity of previous preparation upon the part of man, when he is about to perform any of those acts in which it pleases Almighty God to be using him as an instrument and a secondary cause. On this same principle, the Church does not allow her greater Festivals to come suddenly upon us, and to find us unprepared, but by the institution of the vigil of a feast, she secures previous thoughtfulness, and the putting on of the spirit most in harmony with the occasion. The whole time of the Old Law, indeed, was a time of preparation for the New, as the Church so often suggests to us in this holy and acceptable time of Advent, with its four weeks symbolical of the four thousand years during which the world was sighing for its Redeemer, and calling upon the heavens to drop down dew from above, and the clouds to rain down the Just One. And as the great event of the Incarnation was nearer to its accomplishment, we find the work of preparation more earnest and active. The Precursor is born, and is sent, as his

father Zachary declares in his Canticle, to go before the face of the Lord in order to prepare His ways. And when our Lord, having come to His own, though as yet unrecognized, is about to commence His missionary work, and to inaugurate the powers and Sacraments of the New Law, the same Precursor also goes before Him as a preacher, *the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.*

More than this, we see how the work of preparation was hallowed and placed in prominent importance by the conduct of our Blessed Lord in His own personal acts. Having prepared for His Birth by forming the perfection of His Immaculate Mother, He becomes *incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and is made Man.* And though He desires earnestly to run His course like the giant, and to go out upon His work of teaching and gaining souls, as we see from the one recorded act of His boyhood, the finding in the Temple among the doctors, yet He makes almost the whole of His life one of preparation, and at the age of thirty enters upon His three years' career of outward labour. As far as His Apostles and His Church were concerned, even those three years had but a preparatory object. It was then, indeed, that we were redeemed, and that the Church was founded; but yet the first founders of the Church, under Himself—for the Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles—were not to have their full powers, nor to enter upon their course, until they had been prepared and tutored under His superintendence. And well do we know, from reading their history in the Gospel, how much they needed that preparation and course of train-

ing. Even His Death, and His Resurrection and Ascension which followed, did not complete the work, but preparation was still needed. The Church was not to be perfected until the Holy Spirit had come down upon it, and this was not to be immediately after the Ascension. The Holy Spirit had been promised over and over again, and the Apostles might well sigh for His coming to perfect them with His gifts, and then enable them to go out boldly and fervently upon their noble task. But what was to be the case? The order is given to them to suspend all active work for a time, and to go on with their preparation. *Stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high.* And for nine whole days after the Ascension did they wait in prayer and patience with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Beautifully does St. Bonaventure describe how the nine Choirs of Angels, upon those nine intervening days, busied themselves in preparing the Apostles, each Choir of the heavenly hierarchy taking one day under its care in fitting them for their holy duty. And because they had been so obedient and fervent in the work of preparation, therefore, when the Holy Spirit came upon them upon the tenth day, He found them ready to receive His gifts, and filled them with Himself. *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak.*

For the great event which is now on the eve of its accomplishment, a similar preparation has been made throughout the world. Whilst the Bishops are travelling towards the city, and remaining in it, they and their flocks have been engaged in preliminary prayer. We have been celebrating that Novena, or nine days' devotion, in preparation for the grand Festival of the

Immaculate Conception, upon which the Council is to commence its labours, and upon which we know that the Holy Spirit will come down upon the assembled Fathers, successors of the Apostles, and by His Presence enable them to begin to speak, and to make declarations of truth in opposition to whatever errors they will be inspired to denounce. How many thousands and thousands of invocations of the Holy Spirit have been made throughout the whole globe during the period of preparation! And when, upon that great opening day, thousands will, in the glorious Vatican Basilica, again call for a renewal of the blessings of Pentecost, those blessings will not be withheld, but the tribunal will be made infallible, and the universe, which has been praying, will wait in a spirit of submissive expectation for the decisions which will be arrived at by the Holy Ghost and those whom He will have inspired.

The preparatory acts of a General Council always important as they must be, from what we have seen, are, in the instance of the present Council, of peculiar interest and importance. These preparatory acts may be divided into two general classes: some are more remotely, others more immediately, connected with the Council. We will say a few words upon both of these classes. The terms really explain themselves. The remote acts are those which are performed some time before the opening of a Council; the immediate acts of preparation are those which more closely precede it.

The first remote act of preparation is that which is connected with the authoritative summoning of the Council. It is that which is called the Bull of Indiction, or Convocation. This Bull, or solemn Pontifical Letter,

ordering all the Bishops, under holy obedience, and under the obligation of the oath which each Bishop takes at his consecration, is always issued by the Pope, to whom alone it belongs, to summon an Œcumenical Council, at such an interval before the Council, as to give due time to Bishops at great distances from the place of assemblage, to make the necessary arrangements for leaving their dioceses, and to come prepared for the work of the Council. In the present instance, the stages in the act of summoning the Council have been these. In the month of June, 1867, on the occasion of the gathering of a great number of Bishops in Rome, for the eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, one-half of the Episcopate of the world being present, the Holy Father intimated to them the expediency of an Œcumenical Council, and expressed his intention of summoning one. In an address to the Pope, on that same occasion, the Bishops unanimously, and in fervent terms encouraged the Holy Father to carry out his resolution, and assured him how joyfully, and with what entire obedience, they would obey his summons. On the 29th of June, in the following year, 1868, the formal summons was issued, naming the place, the Vatican Basilica, in Rome, and the day, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the 8th of December, 1869; and thus more than a year's notice was given, in order that to those living at the greatest distance due time for preparation might be allowed. This is the first remote preparatory act.

The second, which accompanies the first, is fixing the place in which the Council is to be held. The Council is to take its name from the place where it sits, and thus an everlasting remembrance is to be

attached to it. Sometimes the Council is named merely from the city in which it is held, as is the case in most instances ; sometimes from the Church, as has been the case with the Œcumenical Councils held in Rome, called the Lateran Councils, because they sat in the ancient Basilica of St. John Lateran. The present, which is also to assemble in Rome, is called the Vatican Council, because its place of assemblage is the glorious Basilica of St. Peter, on the Vatican. The eight earlier Œcumenical Councils, as the matter considered in them particularly concerned the East, were held in that part of the globe. The ten later ones, which have mostly had matters of Discipline to consider, have been held in the West ; for the East, after the schism of Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and his heresy against the Holy Ghost, sacrificed its claim as the place of assemblage for these majestic gatherings of the Episcopate. One-half of the Œcumenical Councils of the East, four out of eight, were held in the capital of the East, Constantinople. One-half of the Œcumenical Councils of the West, five out of ten, have been held in the Catholic capital Rome, and now a sixth is to be held there. It is obviously the fitting place for such a meeting, and the place in which all the later Councils would have been held, except for some obstacle which prevented them. It was the place first suggested and intended for the Council of Trent, but the disturbed state of affairs made it out of the question afterwards. The five Councils which had sat in the Lateran, had not the opportunity which is now afforded by the splendid Vatican Basilica, which has been completed only since the Council of Trent. And the fact of this noble Church standing upon the spot of the Basilica commenced

by the Emperor Constantine, in the year of our Lord 325, the year of the Council of Nicæa, associates the first with the present Œcumenical Council, and may not unaptly be considered as symbolical of the spirit which will animate this Council, which will again defend the Divinity of our Lord, and the truth of His doctrines against the actual assailants of the Church. In this same Church also exists the shrine of the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul; and we may well conceive how their brave and undaunted spirit will influence the Fathers assembled in defence of the cause which they maintained with such zeal against the world. We shall find St. Peter again ruling in the Head of the Church, and St. Paul vigorously acting in the members of the Council. The place, once fixed for the holding of this Council, has never been changed, and is now in readiness to receive its illustrious guests.

Together with fixing the place of the Council, is associated another preparatory act, that of fixing its *time*. Here, again, is a fitness which must be admitted to be quite in accordance with all our sympathies. The festival of the Immaculate Conception is a day of very special joy to the Church in the time of the present Pontificate. The question, which had not before been dogmatically decided, has been defined by our present Holy Father; and on the fifteenth anniversary of the dogmatical definition, on the festival itself, that which may be considered, in the ordinary ways of Providence, as the closing glory of a Pontificate more than usually celebrated, is to be solemnized—the opening of the Œcumenical Council, placed under the especial guardianship of Mary conceived Immaculate. The spirit of the glorious old Council of Ephesus must

be about the present Council also, and we may be quite sure that a patronage so powerful will not be wanting to it. What is wonderful, and what shows that the hand of God is with the Council, is the fact that the time, the very day, fixed originally has never been interfered with, and during this week we are to see the accomplishment of a fact determined upon so long ago. Many Councils have been greatly impeded just at the time in which they were to assemble, and the most noted amongst those which have thus suffered and been affected, is the Council of Trent. This Council was some fifteen years in preparation, besides sitting for eighteen years. And though the day originally fixed for the Council of the Vatican has never been changed, we are not to suppose that the interval has been one of repose for the Church militant. We have seen that the Bull of Indiction or Convocation was issued in June, 1868, and at that time, the 8th of December, 1869, was appointed as the opening day. And the day has never been changed. Nor has it been a time of peace as far as the holy City of Rome is concerned. What Catholic can forget the battle of Mentana, and the ignominious defeat upon that day of the insolent, but, as they then proved themselves to be, cowardly assailants of the Holy See? And that battle, in defence of Rome, took place on the 3rd of November, 1868, a little more than four months after the Bull of Indiction had been published. It is well known how, at the time of the attack then made upon the Pope's dominions, it was intended to inundate Rome with the blood of the Pope, and Cardinals, and Clergy, and that the world in its battle against the Church was to prove how it could prevent the assembling of the Council in contemplation. It was again the chal-

lence of the Philistines against Israel. And a huge Goliath was put forward as the champion of the enemies of the Church, exaggerated in the mind of a too credulous world into the proportions of a giant, and with great boasting defied the followers of the Holy Father to defend themselves against his unequalled power. *There went out a man base-born—I am quoting, my dear brethren, from the first Book of Kings—from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath . . . and he had a helmet of brass upon his head . . . and he had greaves of brass on his legs, and a buckler of brass covered his shoulders. . . . And standing he cried out to the bands of Israel, and said to them: Why are you come out prepared to fight? Am not I a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose out a man of you, and let him come down to fight hand to hand.* (1 Kings xvii.) But fortunately the spirit of David was not wanting to the people of God, and against this arrogant and profane scoffer of everything holy, many a young brave volunteer went out, and on the glorious day of Mentana drove back the boaster. His war-cry had been “Rome or Death.” The gallant defenders of the cause of God, amongst them some of our young English Catholics, prevented the former of these alternatives. It was not bravery that averted the latter. And now where is that man whom even England one day welcomed as a hero? In a little out-of-the-way island, he remains in a well-deserved contempt; and the Pope whom he attacked is surrounded by the flower of the Episcopate of the world. His wish has been carried out; his command has been obeyed; and the Œcumenical Council is assembling in the Vatican.

One more among the remote acts of preparation to which

we will for a moment attend, is the declaring of the cause which is to form the chief matter for deliberation in the Council. This is always suggested in the Bull of Indiction. The Syllabus of condemned errors in 1864 gave a sufficient intimation of the matter supplied by the enemies of the Church for the deliberation of the Council; and the Holy Father, in his letter commanding the attendance of the Bishops, states what is to be their work when gathered, with him, under the presidency of the Holy Spirit. "It is well seen and understood by all," he says to them, "by how fearful a tempest the Church is at this time shaken, and with what great evils society itself is afflicted. By the most bitter enemies of God and men, the Catholic Church and her salutary doctrine and venerable power, and the supreme authority of this Holy See have been oppressed and trodden under foot, and all sacred things despised, and ecclesiastical possessions plundered; bishops, and most excellent men devoted to the divine ministry, and men remarkable for their Catholic spirit, in every way harassed; religious houses overthrown, and impious books of every kind, and pestilential journals, and most pernicious many-shaped sects everywhere spread abroad; and the education of unhappy youth almost everywhere taken away from the clergy; and, what is worse, in no few places committed to the teachers of iniquity and error. Hence, to our own extreme grief and that of all good men, and to a most deplorable loss of souls, everywhere impiety has been so propagated, and corruption of morals also, and unbridled licence, and the contagion of evil opinions of every kind, and of all vices and depravities, and violation of doctrine and human laws, that not only our most holy religion,

but human society also, is miserably disturbed and harassed." Oppressed, therefore, as the Holy Father feels himself to be by such calamities, he determines to draw around himself, both for his own consolation and for the defence of the Church, and moreover for the good of society which is also under his care, as the first duty of society is its duty to God and religion, the Bishops who are appointed under him, to rule the flock which is entrusted to them.

There is somewhat of a striking coincidence between the present Council, and the one which has immediately preceded it, the Council of Trent, that both of these Councils opened at the same period of the Ecclesiastical year. The present Council is to open on the 8th of December: the Council of Trent held its inaugural meeting on the 13th of December, 1545. But a fortnight before its opening, on the first Sunday of Advent, when many Bishops had already arrived in Trent, and the work of preparation was going actively forward, Father Dominic Soto, an illustrious Dominican theologian, who was present, preached before the Fathers who were then assembled, and took for his subject the Gospel of the Sunday, which gives an account of the future general judgment of the world upon the last day. "This last judgment," he well said, "may truly be called an Œcumenical and Universal Council, but it is one which will not have to meet with all the obstacles and delays which have been in the way of the Council now assembling. In what state," he continued, "may we not now find the Church for which Jesus Christ shed His Precious Blood, and laid down His life? The sun, the spiritual power, seems to refuse to give its light. The moon, the temporal power,

is turned into blood by such prevailing wars: the stars, the saints, are falling upon the ground, for their images are desecrated and trodden under foot. It is therefore time for us to arise from sleep, and to avert the justice of God." The evils which that good father deplored, do not, we hope, all of them, exist now; but some of them are certainly crying out for remedy; and the Holy Father has given the voice of warning. The evils which exist in the world are too prominent to be ignored, and they must be opposed and averted; the alarm is given, the Church is put upon her defence, and therefore it is that the Œcumenical Council has been convoked.

Among the acts of preparation which more immediately precede the Council, we may first of all name the gathering together of the Bishops. The Bull of Indiction, which commands each Bishop to attend, is cheerfully obeyed, and serves as a test of union with the Holy See. Each Bishop at his consecration, in the oath which he then takes, promises that when cited to a synod, he will obey the summons, unless prevented by any canonical impediment.* Such impediments of course, as age, infirmity, accidental works of importance in their dioceses, a disturbed state of the country, and others such, will always be existing to prevent the attendance of some. But out of the whole Episcopate of the world, amounting at present to about one thousand, scarcely two hundred, it is estimated, will be absent from the present Council. And as we read the titles of those already arrived in Rome, we are quite reminded of the Day of Pentecost, when *devout men of every nation under the sun* had assem-

* *Vocatus ad synodum, veniam, nisi præpeditus fuero Canonica præpeditio.* (Pontificale Romanum.)

bled in Jerusalem. Not only every nation in Europe, but America, both North and South, in great numbers, Asia, Africa, and our Antipodes in Australia send their Fathers to unite with the Holy Father of the faithful in prayer and deliberation for the good of the Church. And on all sides, at the departure of the Bishops, we find affectionate tributes manifested by their flocks. Whole populations have, in some instances, poured out to bid them Godspeed, but nowhere, perhaps, has the fervour of the people shown in itself, more than in free, republican America, as we have before had occasion to observe. It is the first Œcumenical Council in which North America has had an opportunity of being represented, and every single Bishop is said to have started for the good work, with the exception of one who remains to perform Episcopal functions which may be called for during the sitting of the Council.

Another act of immediate preparation is Prayer. This, which was practised so fervently and constantly by the Apostles in the interval after the Ascension, when they were staying in the city, until they were endued with power from on high, has been imposed as a duty upon every one of us for some months past, ever since the formal announcement of the Jubilee published in the course of the summer of this year. In the address made to the faithful of the whole world, through their Bishops, of the Jubilee, which was to commence with the month of June, and is to continue till the completion of the Council, the Holy Father declared that he was himself ever making it an intention in his own prayers, that that Wisdom which sits beside the Throne of God would be with him, and work with him; but in order that God might the

more readily grant what was prayed for, he begged all to unite their prayers with his own; and as prayer from a pure and sinless heart is most acceptable, he took the step most efficacious towards securing a penitential spirit in his children, and granted an indulgence in form of a Jubilee. Gladly have very many amongst you already gained this privilege, and joined in the solemn Triduum which had been ordered for the same end. Each day has the Holy Spirit been invoked in the Holy Sacrifice, and in your own private prayers; and as the time has drawn more closely upon us, you have been joining in the Novena, or nine days' devotion, preparatory for the Festival upon which the great work is to be inaugurated. The whole Church which prayed so anxiously for Peter when in prison, and by prayer gained his wonderful liberation by the Angel, has thus been supplicating for this one object, and such prayers must be heard. And to prayer is attached also the companion work of Fasting; and what Almighty God commanded through the Prophet Joel, in order to obtain grace and mercy, has been very literally followed. *Sanctify ye a fast, call an assembly, gather together the ancients. . . . into the house of your God, and cry ye to the Lord.* (Joel i. 14.) In the holy City of Rome, therefore, the eve of the opening of the Council, as was the case in Trent, has been announced as a day of strict fast.

To prayer is added, especially on the part of the Fathers of the Council, the work of previous study, as an act of immediate preparation for the Council. Already for many months past a body of theologians from various parts of the world had been summoned to Rome to draw up the necessary preliminaries, and to

have ready the voice of Sacred Scripture and tradition, upon the matters which the Holy Father especially desires to be submitted for deliberation and decision. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Wisdom, enlightens the minds of the Bishops, but at the same time requires upon their part that previous preparation which is implied in the proverbial advice, to aid ourselves in order to secure aid from God. In many of the previous Councils of the Church have been manifested the grandest efforts of the human mind. What St. Athanasius did at Nicæa in the arguments he adduced against Arianism, and St. Cyril at Ephesus, in the one hundred and ninety-eight arguments grounded on Sacred Scripture against Nestorianism, other theologians, such as Laynez and Salmeron, did at Trent. The letters, which many Bishops have already published on the present Council, show that there will not be wanting in the Council of the Vatican a display of learning not unworthy of previous occasions; and however much the world may boast of its enlightenment and progress, it will find itself greatly outmatched in the defence made against its assaults in the war now about to be declared. Each Bishop brings with him the tradition of his own diocese. He comes, well aware of the difficulties to be surmounted, and well supplied with prudent suggestions and practical advice upon the questions at issue. No precipitate judgment upon any matter therefore, can be arrived at. The comparison will be made of many various experiences; counsel will be asked from and given by those best suited to give it, and there can be then no room for regret at any decisions arrived at and acted upon; for so says the Wise Man: *My son, do thou nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent*

when thou hast done. (Eccles. xxxiii. 24.) If it be asked, as it has been with some kind of profanity, what need there can be of previous prayer and study in order to secure an infallible decision from a Council, which is supposed, from its very nature, to be infallible, we find our best answer in the text with which we started. Our Blessed Lord promised and repeatedly assured His Apostles, that when He returned to His Father He would send down upon them the Holy Spirit, and that this Spirit of Truth would guide them into all truth, and would strengthen them in their struggle against the world. Therefore it was quite certain that they were to be endued with power from on high, but still they remained in the city, preparing themselves, that they might be worthy of the great gift that was in store for them. So even our Blessed Lord prayed for Himself, though He was full of grace and truth; for we are never to tempt God by making ourselves unworthy of His graces, but must always endeavour by prayer and preparation to make grace abound in us more and more.

The Holy Father has already intimated another preparatory act of the Council, which has especial reference to England. You may all of you have seen or heard of the strange productions in the press, of a certain member of one or other of the numerous sects, which are sheltered in the Church which usually goes by the name of Protestant—a clergyman “from Scotland,” as he has been described by our Holy Father, in one of those letters in which he shows that his watchfulness over the Church allows him to condescend so low as even to notice this self-constituted champion of the Protestant cause. And you may remember how this champion, not believing in

the Divine institution of Bishops, and not knowing the Latin for a Priest,* wished to claim admission to the Council, and pretended when there to overthrow, by his superior Scriptural knowledge, that Church which is protected against stronger attacks than his. And as the Holy Father in a letter to the Primate of the Catholic Hierarchy in England, stated that no admission could be granted to such an aspirant, and that questions already closed could not be allowed to be opened again, yet fearing that his message might be misunderstood, and that it might be thought that there was no possibility whatever for Anglicans who had difficulties to propose, having a patient consideration shown to them, has appointed beforehand a special commission to attend to any petitions forwarded from members of the separated congregations in England, and assures all of them with what affection he, as the Father of the faithful, will receive those who wish to enter into communion with the Church Catholic.† England certainly owes, in the spiritual order, everything to Rome. It was Rome that in very early times, in the days of our British ancestors, sent missionaries to labour here, when the Pope, St. Eleutherius, in the year of our Lord 183, assented to the request that was made to him by envoys from Britain, and evangelised the country. It was Rome that afterwards, some centuries later, sent St. Augustine over, the founder of the Hierarchy which remained faithful till the days of the Reformation. It was Rome which watched so anxiously over England in the days of trial and persecution which attended upon that Reformation,

* He signs his name at the end of a letter, supposed to be in Latin, Joannes Cumming, Presbyterus.

† See Note C, at the end.

and which in our own times has reinstated the Hierarchy, substituting Westminster for Canterbury. And now, that many out of communion with Rome are yearning for reunion, we find this same Holy See of Rome making preliminary arrangements to remove obstacles, and to encourage to a return any prodigal children who have entered into themselves, and are willing to resolve to arise and go to their Father, who is looking out eagerly and affectionately for their return to unity. May God grant that the Commission appointed may not be fruitless, but may be the means of bringing many into the One Fold of the One Shepherd !

But as an Œcumenical Council always has a defensive work to perform, there is also a preparation going on upon the part of those against whom the Church is placed upon the defensive. There are certainly signs of very unwonted activity in the camps of those opposed to us ; and all this activity is evoked by the fact of the Council. Here again the old truth is illustrated—that Protestantism would be an impossibility only for the Catholic Church. If there were no Catholic Church to protest against, Protestantism could have nothing to do. Its work is but negative and aggressive, and it presupposes the existence of the truth which it denies, and of the body which it assails. The protesting spirit of Pharisees implied the existence of the sacred acts and lessons against which they were exerting themselves, whilst they were constantly lying in wait to entrap our Blessed Lord in His speech and His conduct. We are therefore not surprised to see in our papers notices of revival meetings, and earnest invitations to prayer meetings, during the present crisis, as they style it. High Church and Low Church, Dissenters, Presbyterians,

even Unitarians, who can have no great love for Œcumenical Councils if they have ever heard of the Council of Nicæa, all these are combining their efforts, and trying whether they cannot after all prove themselves too strong for the prophecy which has declared, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church. For our Blessed Lord certainly did say, when He spoke to St. Peter, that against the Church built upon him those gates never should prevail. Unconsciously, for a long time past, all these enemies of the Church have been preparing matter for the Council; and now when they discover that the watchful eye of the Church has found out their plans, and that a defence is to be organised against them, they become unusually active and zealous. You will find all through the Gospel, that when our Blessed Lord performed a miracle, or declared a truth of unusual importance, the resisting power of the Pharisees became displayed with more than usual zeal. If He cures a poor palsied man, after having first absolved him from his sins, they cry out in virtuous indignation: *Who can forgive sins, but God alone?* If He foretels the Real Presence of Himself which was to be one day perpetuated in the Blessed Eucharist, they cry out in the same spirit: *How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?* They profess to be putting themselves upon the side of God, and yet are attacking the very Son of God; no wonder that some pretend to be putting themselves upon the side of God, and yet are attacking the Church of God. And as they are vigorous in their attacks upon the Council, and in the preparation which they are making against it, this comes as an additional reason why we, children of the Church, loyal and devoted as children ought to be, must

take up her cause with the greater zeal, and in the conflict which is going on, rank ourselves bravely and confidently upon the side of God.

Enter, then, with the Church upon the acts of preparation, and feel, what is truly the case, that you are to take a part in the noble work which will be inaugurated on the happy Festival now so close upon us. The glory of God has to be promoted against infidelity; the progress of religion and faith against Rationalism; the necessity and the dignity of Divine worship has to be defended against the spirit of Naturalism; morality and discipline are to be insisted upon against sensuality and licentiousness; the very peace and welfare of society have to be protected against the unquiet and secret plans of Socialism; and the instruction and religious training of the young to be guarded with all anxiety against those principles of indifferentism and irreligion, which by one means or another the world is trying to insinuate into the rising generation. Ought you not all to be proud to take a share in such a cause; and especially you, parents, ought not you for the sake of your children, to do everything to avert the spiritual Massacre of the Innocents, that you yourselves may not have to join in the anguish of Rachel, and lament over the loss of souls so dear to you?

Looking forward to the result of the noble work now on the eve of its commencement, we can, and we must be filled with cheerful confidence. Depend upon it, it is an inauguration from which good will follow, and we are all anxious to have a share in the victory which must be achieved. Come, then, especially on the morning of Wednesday next, and join then in spirit in the grand ceremonial of the opening of the Council of the Vatican.

More hearts than bodies will on that morning be present in that glorious Basilica, taking part in the good and holy act by which that day will be held in everlasting memory; and in addition to the fifty thousand voices which will then take up the chant of the *Veni Creator* and the *Te Deum*, fifty millions and more will be invoking the same Holy Spirit and joining in the same hymn of thanksgiving and praise. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which will be coincident with a portion of their ceremonial, and in Holy Communion, we shall be equally happy and blessed, and have essentially as true an object to dwell upon in our fervent prayers, as those who may accidentally be more privileged than ourselves. And when in answer to so many invocations, and in reward of such earnest preparation, the Holy Spirit will descend upon the Holy Father and his fellow-counsellors—the spirit of union, of wisdom, of strength, and of love—we may be sure that these Apostles will be again endued with power from on high, and will be the means of securing the blessings for which in this Advent time we are all preparing: Glory to God and peace to man.

LECTURE X.

THE COUNCIL AT WORK. WHAT THE COUNCIL IS ACTUALLY DOING.

Rejoice always in the Lord : again, I say, rejoice.—PHIL. iv. 4.

IT was in these words of the holy Apostle St. Paul, brought before us by the Church in the Epistle of this, the third Sunday of Advent, that on the opening day of the Council of Trent, on the 13th day of December, 1545, the Bishop who preached the inaugural sermon, welcomed the Fathers who were then assembled. "Rejoice, my Fathers," he said, "rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice you, my brethren ; and again I say rejoice, all of you. For the acceptable time has now arrived, and the opening of this Council, so long delayed, has at length, by the blessing of God, been brought into reality."* But to us the words are applicable with fuller force. We have greater reason to rejoice, because the great event once determined upon, notwithstanding the criticism and opposition of an adverse world has never been delayed. Every obstacle has sunk away, and the event has come happily to pass.

For two years and more, there has been an expectation, that in resistance to the attacks made upon God and His Church, and His Vicar upon earth, the whole Episcopate of the world would combine, and defend the cause entrusted to them. The world has been using its old accus-

* Labbe, vol. xiv. p. 990.

tomed weapons of its own wisdom : it has threatened, it has ridiculed, it has prophesied ; but in spite of all its opposition and endeavours, the event has come to pass, and the grandest event to which perhaps the world has ever witnessed, has come to pass. And now there are gathered together eight hundred Prelates of the Catholic Church, who are proving to the universe that Almighty God knows how to fight His own battles, and to bring to nought the plans that are contrived against Him. It is written : *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi. 30) ; and the world so far stands condemned and confuted : the Holy Spirit has succeeded and has brought together those whom He Himself has appointed to do His work upon earth. Let us, therefore, rejoice ; for God has conquered.

We are this evening considering, for the tenth time, the great event of the Council ; and if it was with a certain amount of hesitation and timidity that I first entered upon our task—not because of the work, but because of my inequality to it—my fear is now of another kind. I feel that I am under the influence of a joy and an enthusiasm which is pervading the whole Catholic Church, and there is required an effort to control the feelings by which we are animated ; for there is a spirit of triumph prevailing throughout the whole Church in connexion with the great and holy event which has been accomplished, and with the good and useful labours which have now commenced. And you, and I, and all of us, may well rejoice, because the cause of God and of His Holy Church is now in a state of triumph. We see it through the signs of joy manifested

in the City of Rome upon Wednesday last, and can almost imagine that we hear the clanging of the bells, and the thunder of the cannon, announcing to the world that the Vatican Council has been opened. We see it in the full attendance at Mass and Holy Communion, which we are assured from every quarter marked the morning of that glorious Festival. We see it in the angry spirit which has revealed the feelings of confusion and humiliation upon the part of the enemies of the Church. Press and Pulpit have been active in this manifestation, and have justified the question of the Psalmist: *Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people meditated vain things . . . against the Lord, and against His Anointed One ?*

The Council has now commenced its work, and there are many questions asked as to what the Council is doing. The time of preparation has passed. The Bull of Indiction has been before the world for more than a year. It has been obeyed ; and, as a fact, the Council really has come into existence. But what is it doing ? Now that the great and important fact has come to pass, what is to come of it ? What is the Council doing ? Have all these Bishops, from every quarter of the globe, come together merely for nothing—to show their servility to a power which they acknowledge to be over them ? Or have they come together to do anything ? And if so, what ? Therefore again the question is asked : What is the Council doing ? I may answer this question in two ways. To those who would ask it in a scoffing, and criticizing tone, and in a spirit of worldly boasting, I must answer it in one way. To those who, as good and faithful children of the Church, interested in every movement

which concerns her and the good cause entrusted to her, I may answer it in another and a fuller manner.

When, therefore, the world, in a tone of ridicule, asks, according to its wont, what the Council is doing, I may answer, as a good Christian answered a question asked in a similar spirit in the days of Julian the Apostate. The reign, short but severely trying, of that emperor was one of unusually alarming anxiety to the Church. Forty years had elapsed since the time of the Emperor Constantine and the first General Council of Nicæa. There now succeeded to the empire, Julian, who was destined, in the mysterious ways of Divine Providence, to be a severe trial to the Church. He found the laws of Christian morality to be too strict for his notions and tendencies, and therefore he gave up the faith and gained the name, by which he has always been known, of the Apostate. He became also a violent persecutor of the Church, encouraged the Arians in their heresy, and adopted that kind of argument against religion, which, in default of any other, is often considered very powerful, namely, ridicule. The mode of life followed by our Blessed Redeemer, who came into the world poor and humble, and lived amongst the simple and the rejected of the world, was especially an object of his satire. Among his favourites was the philosopher Libanius, who courted the favour of his master by joining in his attacks and his railleries against the Christians. This philosopher, meeting one day in Antioch a pious Christian preceptor, asked him in a scoffing tone: "Well! and what is the Carpenter's Son doing now?" But he received an answer that he little expected, a prophetic answer which was soon

but too awfully verified. "He is engaged at present," was the reply, "in making a coffin for the emperor's funeral." And the coffin was wanted, for the next day the apostate emperor fell in battle and died miserably.* And when in this same tone of ridicule, the self-willed world which cannot brook the dictates of a Council, assembled for the cause of God and His Church, asks what the Council is doing, we can answer that it is preparing to bury all the iniquitous principles which are now-a-days being acted upon in so many nations of the globe.

But to those, such as you, my dear brethren, who ask the question, what the Council is doing now that it is at work, in a spirit of interesting inquiry, and for the sake of an information which you are desirous to acquire, because it concerns all that is dearest to you, I will endeavour to answer the question in such a manner as to satisfy your demands, and to enable you to give some instruction to others who may put the question to you. The Council is now doing its goodly work in a double way. It is doing it passively and actively. I will explain what I mean.

The Council is doing its work passively, but effectually, in the mere fact of its having assembled. As yet it has made no decrees, it has not commenced to anathematize any errors, it has not made its profession of Faith. But there it is in existence, like an army drawn up in battle array, asserting by its very presence that it is ready for its work, and that it defies all opposition, inasmuch as it has Almighty God upon its side, and it is for His cause

* Theodoret Hist. Eccl. Book iii. chap. xviii. Apud Darras Histoire de l'Eglise vol. x. p. 161.

that it has been brought together. The world has an opportunity of now seeing its own short-sightedness, and its impotency against the Church. Its ill-boding prophecies, its efforts of intimidation, its past declarations of impossibility, and its present manifestations of uneasiness at seeing the Council really in existence, are evidences against it, and in favour of the Council and the Church. All the criticisms, the distortion of facts, the misrepresentations, the imputation of unworthy motives, the attempts at ridicule which are found so prevalent in the untruthful and unscrupulous leading organs of the press, all this really opens men's eyes to the fact that the Church is succeeding, and that the world is mortified and angered at her success. And yet the Council has not yet had occasion to strike a single blow, or to utter a word. It has shown itself in its majesty, and has confused its enemies.

For what is the fact, which the Council in its gathering has proved and is illustrating? The Pope, claiming power, as Head of the Church and successor of St. Peter, has summoned men of authority from every quarter of the globe, commending them by virtue of the obedience which they owe him, to attend at a given place, on a given day, and for a special purpose. The power has been gladly, universally, and actively acknowledged and obeyed, without a single dissentient or protesting voice. Those who have obeyed, and have come in person to attend, have admitted that they came obediently as fellow-members under one and the same Head. Those who, through infirmity, or by just reasons of necessity, have been unable to attend, admit by their asking leave of absence, and stating their grounds for asking it, that they unite in the same obedience, and acknowledge

the same power. Here is a fact which the Council is passively affirming in the mere reality of its existence.

And, now, as coolly and reasonably as possible, let us try and account for the fact. There must be some mode of accounting for it, for it is a fact, clear and palpable. There must be a cause for it, either natural or supernatural. Is it merely a natural and human motive and influence which bears upon all these men of such different countries, with such a variety of national feelings and prejudices, and which can succeed in thus drawing them together. Remember, that those who have assembled, very many of them having come from the greatest possible distance, are not young men, in whom we might find a spirit and love for adventure and change. They are, most of them, from the very nature of their office, more advanced in life, venerable, borne down, perhaps, with the weight of cares at home in their dioceses, and beyond the reach of a passing enthusiasm. One, the Archbishop of Lima, asks exemption from attending, having reached the patriarchal age of of ninety-four; another has died upon his journey, broken down by fatigue and old age. And of those who have arrived, and are now doing their work in the Council, there are many who have suffered, as St. Paul did in his labours for the Gospel, perils by sea and perils by land, as if the very elements would join in framing difficulties and obstacles towards the accomplishment of the work of God. There is nothing temporal to gain; but heavy expenses—not borne now in most instances by the Governments of the nations from which the Bishops have come—fall to the share of those who have travelled to the Council. Is it possible, then, to suggest any temporal or human motive which has

influenced them? It is not a natural motive; but a supernatural power, even that of the Holy Spirit of Truth, whose defenders and fellow-labourers are found in the Catholic Episcopate, has drawn together into one spot, those who even when separated in place, are united into one body under one Head.

What else but an Œcumenical Council could succeed in realising such a meeting? Never before has the world witnessed its equal, certainly in the number and diversity of nations now represented in the Holy City of Rome. One Council, the second of Lateran, has exceeded it in the number of Prelates attending, but none then came, as they now do, from the very antipodes, and from parts of the world at that time undiscovered or uncivilised. And all of these are coming to testify to the one truth held uniformly throughout the globe, regarding the Church and its supreme Head upon earth. We have been assured that even our Holy Father himself has been astonished at the numbers that have attended. He expected that some five hundred might have been able to join personally in the work of the Council; but the eagerness to run to his assistance has been beyond his expectations, and half as many again, and even more than that, have gathered around him. It is, indeed, no mere local question that is now in agitation. The whole world is concerned equally and earnestly in the attacks directed against a cause common to all, and felt as sensitively in one nation as in another. And therefore it is that the Church is now through the Council, showing her authority in its fullest and most striking form. A Council may, perhaps, not inappropriately be called a Sacramental manifestation of the authority of the Church. There is

an outward sign of an inward reality. It is outward, clearly appreciable, and undeniable in its reality; and there is, beyond the possibility of question or denial, some inward influencing principle which has brought it into existence, and which gives efficacy to its operation. It bears about it, therefore, an augury of its success; and we can clearly recognise the Hand of God in the work which has been accomplished, and which in its mere existence, before speaking a word, proves that in spite of all opposition it must succeed.

In order to throw into a bolder relief, in this country at least, the unanimous action of the Catholic Episcopate, and the notorious and shameful divisions and protestations of those separated from us, the election, the confirmation, and the consecration of a new Bishop, to a vacant see in the Protestant Church in England has been going on coincidentally with the Œcumenical Council. On the very morning of the magnificent ceremonial in Rome, there was being enacted in a Church in London an event of a very different description, one which, to those who are not obstinately blind, must have given very clear evidence of the total want of union, and of anything like Catholic spirit in the form of religion, now established in this kingdom. Eight hundred Bishops meet in Rome, all in the strictest harmony upon every article of Faith: one Bishop is to be consecrated in London, and there is discord manifested on every side. One of his fellow-bishops writes to try and convince him in "the tenderest terms," that he has been conniving at infidelity, and has made himself a responsible sharer in declarations against Revelation. Another Bishop takes the lead in proceedings brought against the prelate-elect, at the time of his

confirmation to the see to which the Prime Minister has appointed him. But the legal representative of the Primate of the Protestant Church declares that he has no alternative but to pronounce in favour of the Elect, and to confirm his election, because having been named to his see by the Queen, the statute of *Præmunire* insists upon his confirmation and consequent consecration. And thus one who is tenderly told that he has been guilty of heresy and infidelity must be placed in communion, in spite of themselves, with other Bishops who charge him with these faults. It must be done, the judge pronounces, because the Sovereign wills it. Why, my dear brethren, we have always thought that it was the Holy Spirit that presided over the appointment of the Episcopate; and it must be so if St. Paul spoke truly when he thus declared to the elders of Ephesus: *Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops to rule the Church of God.* (Acts xx. 28.) What a contrast is presented between the two scenes! On one side we find Unity and Catholicity: on the other discord and servility to a merely human authority. Those who have described to us the grand Hall in the Vatican in which the Council holds its sittings, have told us of the texts from Sacred Scripture which surmount the entrance into it. *Go teach all nations. Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* There is a text which might well be written over the tribunal, in which the Church of England gives forth its utterances. I say it solemnly, my dear brethren, for it was at a solemn time the words were cried out. The text is this: *We have no King but Cæsar.*

Thus then is the Council doing its work, by showing to the universe that there is such a reality as the Catholic

Church, and pointing out, in an unmistakable manner, where that reality is to be found. God grant that many may be drawn to acknowledge the claims of such a Church, and submit to its authority! The very fact of the Council being in existence is an occasion of grace, and grace ought never to be resisted. But we must pass on to our other answer to the question proposed, and show the active work of the Council.

The world which cannot understand the ways of God, nor the working of the Church of God, professes to be astonished at the want of wisdom and foresight which has suggested the Council, and does not see the necessity of such an assembly. But as the world is not in the secrets of the Church, and certainly does not merit her confidence, we need not be astonished at its being left in the dark upon this important matter. What was the use of the Council, and now that it has assembled, what has it to do? This is the question, asked over and over again by the organs of the world. If the meeting of the Council is so harmless and unimportant an event, and if it really can do nothing, why not leave it alone? And why is there so much uneasiness regarding it, and such suspicious and criticizing inspection of its every movement, if it is simply a helpless and an impotent gathering of feeble and uninfluential members? The world would much rather that matters should be allowed to go on as they have been: all principles of truth and justice disregarded: duties to God and religion despised and neglected: relations between man and man, and between nation and nation, regulated not by maxims of eternal justice, but by expediency and the will of the stronger over the weaker. The world wants to have its own way

in all these matters, and wishes therefore to avert any protest upon the part of the Church, against wickedness which is crying for remedy if not for vengeance. And, after all, if any one ought to know what the active work of the Council is to be, it is the world that ought to know it, and which therefore need not really ask the question. The world has cut out the work of the Council; for I have already had occasion to show you in our eighth lecture, that in the Council we find the Church assembled in order to make a stand against the world.

There is, indeed, about the active work of the present Council, a difficulty which has not existed in most of the Councils which have preceded it. For in the history of the past Councils we usually find that there was something very definite to pronounce upon, and that the question for the Council was obvious and precise. When the Apostles assembled at Jerusalem *to consider this matter*, they had a special difficulty to deal with, and one clear point to decide upon. When the first Council of Nicæa, and the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon assembled, the glorious Mystery of the Incarnation was the question upon which to decide and to pronounce a definition. Even in the last Council, that of Trent, there were many articles of Faith that had been denied, and which the Council had to defend; but still there was something definite in the denial, and an attempt to support the denial by a reference to the revealed Word of God, as we can see by the articles proposed in the Creed drawn up in the Council, and promulgated by Pope Pius IV. But the work of the Council now assembled is, not to explain Revelation and to define truths contained in it, but it is to defend Revelation itself against its numerous and

various assailants. It will have to labour at systematizing a confused mass of declarations against Faith, Discipline, and Morality; and then to put into something like a definite form vague statements, which those who have uttered and published them, have themselves been either afraid, ashamed, or unable to express in terms which can be grasped and openly dealt with. Error always loves to assume the serpent form, but never more so than in the attempts which it is making now-a-days, to gain men from the truth and obedience to God. When, in their future judgment, these poor souls, led away from the path of duty by the influence brought to bear upon them by the world, will be questioned why they went against their conscience, and what they must have known to be their duty, their only excuse will be that of our Mother Eve, when she tried to mitigate her fault: *The serpent deceived me, and I disobeyed.*

Against those vague and meaningless affirmations of the world in favour of what it calls civilisation and progress, words which it uses but cannot define, the Church clearly sees what is her duty, and this is what the Council will have to maintain. The world finds Almighty God in the way, and wants to dispense with Him. Laws of justice are against what the world calls civilisation, and they must be dispensed with and abrogated. Laws of obedience are against what the world calls progress, and *they* must be dispensed with and abrogated. Laws of Faith in Revelation are against what the world dignifies by the name of science, and these, too, must give way: *they* must be dispensed with and abrogated. The Church simply wishes to keep Almighty God in His own created universe, and to give Him power and authority over His

own creatures ; the world will not have His interference, and wishes to drive Him out of His own dominions. It has learnt to dethrone sovereigns upon earth ; and it is wicked enough in its ambition to aim at dethroning the Almighty. It is vying with the pride of Lucifer ; it says : *I will not serve.* And the Church stands forward, as St. Michael did, and takes his motto : *Who is like unto God ?* We can conceive, therefore, that into the active work of the Council will enter the task of declaring to the world, that there is no antagonism between Reason and Revelation. Both deal with truth, and truth is one ; both come from God, and God cannot contradict Himself. He does not, and He cannot, teach one thing by Reason, and its contradictory by Revelation. Strange it may seem, but it is worthy of observation, that the Church, which admits both Reason and Revelation, sees, and lovingly admits their harmony ; but the folly of the world, which *says in its heart, there is no God*, denies Revelation, and asserts a discord. That which admits both sees the harmony, and defends it. That which admits only one sees contradiction, and attacks what it denies. Here, then, is where the world will be giving work to the Council, and yet asks what will the Council have to do.

To enter a little more definitely into the work of a Council, we may observe that the Church always has this threefold work, and that it will be actively engaged about it in the Council. She has to protect, to defend, and, when there is need, to attack. The Church has to protect what is committed to her. The words of St. Paul, so often cited, declare this duty : *Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed*

you Bishops, to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood. Each Bishop has the pastoral care of the diocese entrusted to him, and he has to exercise over it the office of the Good Shepherd. And when all are united together in council, the whole Church is gathered more compactly under their protecting care; and it is by the united experience afforded by such a meeting of pastors that the flock is more surely sheltered, and danger more effectually averted. The Church also has to defend. The difference between protecting and defending is this, that defending implies the presence of a danger or an attack, against which the previous work of protection has been substantially a safeguard, but yet inadequate without a special effort of watchfulness and zeal. The shepherd who has his flock always under protection, exerts special means of defence when the enemy is at hand. Both our Blessed Lord and St. Paul speak about special times, when ravenous wolves will come and attack, and try to ravage the flock: then is the time to be on the defence. The Council now shows the Church in such an attitude. And, though the world professes to be scandalized at such a declaration, the Church has also, in its proper season, the duty to attack. What is meant by this? The Israelites, in taking possession of the land of promise, represent the Church in its work of propagating itself throughout the whole globe. They were to march steadily forward, destroying the cities of those who opposed them, and were to possess the land which was destined for them by God, to whom belongeth *the earth and the fulness thereof*. And so was it also with the mission of Jeremias, who had to destroy as well as to plant and to build. When, therefore, the Church, to

whom is committed the guardianship of the Faith, finds it necessary to call down upon dangerous errors the judgment and punishment of Almighty God, she declares openly in her Councils that such errors, and those who wilfully embrace them, are objects of hatred to God, and deserve to be rejected by Him. This is done on the principle laid down by our Blessed Lord, that we cannot serve two masters, but that we must love one and hate the other, when such masters are opposed to each other, as are God and the world. This is by no means the exercise of a new power on the part of the Church, as those who resist her ordinances pretend sometimes to teach. Hear what St. Paul says, in his zeal for the love and truth of God: *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema* (1 Cor. xvi. 22); and more directly in defence of dogmatic authority on the part of teachers authorized by God, he says: *Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a Gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.* (Gal. i. 8.) And in the early Councils, in which were defended the doctrines of the Church upon the Mystery of the Incarnation against Arians and Nestorians, and such like assailants, the Fathers of Nicæa and Ephesus did not hesitate to pronounce anathema, in the Canons of those Councils, against all who refused to accept the Faith which they had defined. And these are Councils, always remember, to which the English Church is committed equally with ourselves. What the Catholic Church always reminds us is, that we cannot be one mind and heart with God unless we love what He loves, and condemn what He condemns.

In the active work of the Council again, as it is a deliberative assembly, every question that is brought before

it, just as in our own Parliament, is proposed, discussed, and determined upon. Each question is to be duly proposed; and as a Council affords a means of clearing up difficulties, and suggesting and providing remedies for evils which may arise in any quarter of the globe, each Bishop has the opportunity of proposing his own questions. His Holiness has already issued instructions giving full liberty, and affording convenience to every Bishop to propose what will be for the general good, merely subjecting the proposal to the approval of a previous committee, in order that every security may be afforded that the time of the Council be not thrown away, in considering questions which it would be unnecessary to discuss.

Questions which are proposed are also submitted to full and free discussion. The questions are examined into, and opinions are given freely upon every side, before the matter is decided upon. Here is a point in which there has been betrayed great ignorance, or a wilful misrepresentation of what the Council does in discussing a question. It is quite certain that in the Council of Jerusalem, after the matter in debate had been proposed, there was much discussion upon the question at issue. And it was only after *much disputing*, that the presiding judge, St. Peter, closed the question, and *all the multitude held their peace*. And we have also seen that although, in the first Council of Nicæa, the heretical doctrine of Arius that had to be condemned was so self-condemnatory as to deserve immediate reprobation, yet the heresiarch was patiently heard, and ample time given for full examination of his teaching, before the Council pronounced its anathemas. Those who will persist in attacking the

present Council seem not to understand the very obvious fact that discussion before a judicial decision, and dissension afterwards are two very different things. And when they see Catholic Bishops, with that liberty which the Church always allows of discussing questions which have not been defined, they only see difference, and not, what is really the case, a perfect unanimity in their readiness to be in perfect agreement immediately that the defining voice closes the matter under consideration. Discussion before a judgment is pronounced is constructive, and helps towards forming that judgment, by removing difficulties: dissension after such a judgment, is destructive, and inconsistent with unity and obedience. Discussion goes before the judgment, seeking for the real truth; dissension follows after, and refuses to accept the truth. Discussion implies liberty; dissension implies self-will and an unsubmissive spirit. Look at the laws by which our country is ruled, and by which its people are kept in peace and harmony. They have been and are framed after much debating, and after a full and free opportunity has been given in our Houses of Parliament, for the advocates and opponents to state their respective views. But when once the law has passed, has received that consent of the Sovereign which completes its enactment, those would not be called loyal subjects who would still stand out against the law; or, at least, they must make up their minds to bear the consequences of their disobedience.

But it is after the discussion, when the matter in question is determined upon, that comes the test of Orthodoxy, and the manifestation of Unity. Then it is that not a word of protest or disapproval will be heard upon the

part of those who profess to be Catholics and true children of the Church. We read in the history of the first Council of Nicæa, that although at the commencement, the party of Arius was not altogether despicable in numbers, all were brought round to sign the profession of Faith, and the condemnation of Arius, with the exception of five, who, of course, by their refusal, shared in the condemnation to which they refused to subscribe. Every subsequent Council, and every defender of the dogmatical authority of the Church has heartily joined in the decision of what they have loved to call the three hundred and eighteen Bishops of Nicæa. Have patience, my dear brethren, with the present Council. It has not as yet commenced its full work. Discussions are going on, but judgments have not yet been pronounced. Wait quietly till the end, and you will see what will be the case. When the message comes forth, and questions have been determined upon, and the Fathers will have told us what hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and themselves, then will be the time to pronounce whether there is not still in the Catholic Church, and especially in the Episcopate, that perfect and practical unanimity, which has been with the Church from the beginning and will continue to the end.

The questions which supply matter for the active work of the Council are in general reducible to the two heads of Faith and Discipline. For to the Church is entrusted the guardianship of both: she has not only to teach us what to believe; but she has to guard morality and to lead on her children in the ways of godliness of life. The decisions of Faith, directly they are made known, at once bind the whole world, because Faith must be one and the same everywhere. But decrees of Discipline

are to be enforced according to the circumstances which may happen to affect times, persons, or places that they may especially concern. Some may be universal, others local; but what is required, and what cannot be wanting in a Catholic spirit, is that all must accept what the Council, under the Holy Spirit, regulates for each. The law has been given, and it must be obeyed, as it always is in the Catholic Church: *Obey your prelates and be subject to them; for they watch as being to render an account of your souls.* But it is perhaps to us, most particularly, the clergy and the religious orders of the Church, that the decrees of discipline may probably most immediately and directly refer; and if there is any one who may be interested about them, it is not the world which murmurs so much about what so little concerns it, as ourselves who are so ready to accept with an obedient spirit and a willing heart, everything that may regard and encourage that greater perfection which the Church always expects to find in those whom she guards as the very apple of her eye, and to whom she always wishes to point as illustrating that mark of sanctity which belongs exclusively to herself. I had occasion to cite for you in our last lecture, when speaking upon the work of preparation for the Council, the words spoken in the presence of the Fathers of Trent, by the Dominican Father who had been called upon to address them just on the eve of that Council, and how he deplored the want of lustre in the brilliancy with which this sanctity ought to be manifested. The Council nobly, and boldly, and practically, did its work in restoring this lustre, and we may hope that it has since not been tarnished in any material degree. Yet as the clergy are men, and not angels, they know

perfectly well, that they who bear the vessels of the Lord, ought to be clean beyond all others, as the prophet declares (Isaias lii. 11), and to be as worthy as possible of their high office, therefore does the Church manifest her solicitude in their regard, and in her canons of discipline regulate that which will tell upon their greater perfection. And why do I say this, my dear brethren, and seem to be confessing in the midst of you our own necessities, but for the sake of showing the anxiety of the Church with regard to all the objects of her responsibility, and especially in regard to those who have upon earth the work of God to do in maintaining His cause, and in labouring for the salvation of His souls? It is because the Church so much values your souls, that she exerts herself to increase the zeal and watchfulness of her ministers to whom those souls are entrusted.

When, therefore, you have now witnessed the inauguration of the good and holy work, which is sure to be to you a presage of the best and richest blessings, have I not a right to bid you rejoice, and to offer acts of praise and thanksgiving to God, the Source and Author of every good and excellent gift. Rejoice, then, and throw yourselves into those feelings of joy with which our good and Holy Father, the Pope, must be animated, when he sees his dearest wishes answered, and finds himself surrounded by the Episcopate of the world, the sharers of his solicitude, whom, in the language of St. Paul, he may well call his joy and his crown. He has wept, and has been in sorrow for us, for upon him is the solicitude of all the Churches. It has been the dangers and evils which have threatened us, and you, and your children, the dearest pledges of God's love to you, which have filled him with

anxiety, and which now prompt him to adopt the most efficacious measures in your behalf. How can he fail in the grand and loving task upon which he has ventured? Every security and pledge of success is attending upon him. God is with him: who can be against him? The Blessed Virgin, Mother of our dearest Lord, who was with the Apostles, when they were assembled on the Day of Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit filled them with His gifts, she, whose Immaculate Conception he has defended and defined, is extending her patronage over him. The very spot of the assembly is a presage of victory and triumph. We are told in ancient history that the Scythians, when in danger from the invasion of their enemies, used to gather themselves together about the tombs of their ancestors, and would then bid defiance to any host that would dare to assail them. The shrine of the holy Apostles, the Patrons of the City of Rome, is the gathering place of the Fathers now assembled together, and the spirit of St. Peter and St. Paul is with them. With these securities, what is so happily commenced, must be happily ended; and the deliberations and decisions of the Council of the Vatican must contribute to the glory of God, the good of the Church, the salvation of souls, and though the world cannot see it, to the well-being of society itself.

LECTURE XI.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE.

What an one, think ye, shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with Him.—LUKE i. 66.

THIS was the exclamation of surprise that was uttered upon all sides, by those who witnessed, and those who had heard of the wonders which attended upon the birth and circumcision of St. John the Baptist. The time of his birth was certainly a very eventful time. The Jewish Church was evidently upon the eve of its dissolution, and the whole world was in constant expectation of a great crisis. For some four hundred years, since the days of Malachy, no great prophet had risen in Israel: and what he, the last of the prophets, had foretold, was close upon its accomplishment. The priesthood of the Old Law had become so unfaithful, that Almighty God declared that He would no longer accept sacrifices or gifts at their hands, but would institute another sacrifice amongst the Gentiles, which was to be offered to Him in every quarter of the globe, from the rising to the setting of the sun. And now this child is born, whose birth causes such surprise, that every one asked the question: *What an one, think ye, shall this child be?* Wonders had preceded his birth, and now accompany his circumcision. The same Archangel Gabriel, who was soon to be sent upon another embassy, to announce the birth of another Child, comes to foretel His coming into the world. The doubting

father, Zachary, is for a time punished by the loss of his speech, which is miraculously restored to him, at the time in which all burst out into their expressions of surprise. It was evident that the Hand of the Lord was with the child, and that he was being raised up for some great work. And all these auguries were true: for you know how great St. John the Baptist became: so great, that some thought that Almighty God was again, after a long interval, sending one of the great prophets to His people: so great, that some mistook him for Elias, and even for the Messiah Himself. The wonders that attended his coming into the world, excited and justified the expectations of his future career, and that future proved that the expectations were not disappointed.

With regard to the great event of the Council of the Vatican which has just been inaugurated, it is the same. Men are astonished, and are anxious to know what this Council is to do, and what is to be its effect and influence on the future. The work of preparation by which it was preluded: the glory of its inauguration: the importance attached to it by the Catholic Church which it represents: the opposition that it has met with from the world against which it is to protest: the taunts and criticisms of which it is the daily object at the hands of those old enemies of the Church, who cannot understand the ways of God: all this suggests the question regarding its future influence, which it will be useful and interesting to consider. The Council is as yet in what may be considered its infancy and childhood. The only solemn and public act which has been performed by it, is its opening. And whilst the Fathers of the Council are at this time of preparation for the Christmas solemnities, preparing also the

matter which will in due time be proposed, deliberated upon, and promulgated for our guidance and instruction, we may devote our thoughts towards its future. The Hand of the Lord is evidently with it. What an one, think ye, will it become ?

This consideration of the influence of the Vatican Council on the future is certainly not an idle or useless task. It has been a motive in the calling of the Council; for when the Holy Father has seen the spirit of impiety which is now so prevalent, he has been eager to check its advancement, and, as far as is in his power, to save the future from consequences which must follow if no resistance be offered. We cannot indeed lose sight of the fact, that in religion the future is a great reality which must be borne in mind. When we are reminded that we have not here a lasting dwelling, but that we are seeking for one that is to come ; when in the first lesson that we were taught in our childhood, that God made us to know Him, love Him, and serve Him here below, in order that we might arrive at a possession of Him hereafter, the principle is enforced of the all-importance of the future as an influencing power in religion. But it is not so much in this light that we are to consider the influence of the Council on the future, though that future, the future of eternity, will in the case of every one of us be affected, accordingly as we accept it or resist it; but it is in the light of its influence upon the future which still, in the Hands of God, is destined for the world here below.

So much does the future of the Church, in this present state of its existence, enter into the sympathies of religion, that Almighty God has at various times inspired prophets to record that future, and has Himself, through the Holy

Spirit, ordered the history of the future to be written down for our instruction, our caution, or our encouragement. At the moment of the sentence pronounced upon our first parents for their fall, when the future might weigh heavily and drearily upon them, it was lighted up by the prospect of One that was to come, who was to repair the evil committed and introduced by them, and was again to unite man in friendship with his Creator. Throughout those long four thousand years, before He came that was to come, faith in His future coming was essential for salvation, hope in His future blessings was the stay and comfort of the children of Israel, and love even for such a benefactor, warmed the hearts of Patriarchs who longed to see Him, and rejoiced in the prophetic sight which was vouchsafed to them. The New Law is the future of the Old; for all that Abraham and the Patriarchs, that Isaias and the Prophets desired and foretold, has now come to pass, and the earth has been blessed by the presence of its Redeemer.

And in the New Law there are prophecies regarding the future, which form articles of our Faith. Amongst these is the indefectibility of the Church. *The gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church: Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world: the Spirit of Truth will abide with you for ever.* These are testimonies in favour of the future, and having been solemnly spoken by our Blessed Lord, and enregistered for us in His Gospel, we must believe them, for His word will never pass away. And thus the future of the Church, its permanence in spite of all opposition and attacks directed against it, and its security from error, are articles of Faith which we must accept, as

we hope for salvation through Him Who has founded the Church.

The prophecy of Simeon, so soon after the Birth of the Desired of Nations, proved how in the minds of prophets, there was anxiety regarding the future of the Child, Who was then brought to be presented in the Temple. Well might the whole world at the Birth and Presentation of its Redeemer, ask the question which was asked regarding His Precursor: *What an one, think ye, will this Child be?* And yet how sad was the prophecy which was then pronounced! For after the aged Patriarch, who had been waiting for the consolation of Israel, and who was reserved for the enjoyment of the privilege of taking the Child into his arms before he should see death, had sung his song of thanksgiving, and had begged to be then dismissed in peace, he altered his tone, and he declared what the universe must have thought would have been so improbable, that that Child *should be set up for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign to be contradicted.* For the fall of many! How could that be? He had come to redeem all: and how could He be set up for the fall of any? And yet it was so declared of Him; and thus the event which was one of the joys of His Life, His being presented to His Father, was also one of His sorrows. It is the fourth joyful Mystery of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, but it is also the first of her Seven Dolours. And did not His future life prove the truth of the prophecy; and, my dear brethren, does not the rejection of His Church, even now-a-days, by those who must see its marks, and the evidence of its divine institution, constantly prove how truly the Holy Spirit showed to the good Simeon, what

was to be the real character of the future of that Child and of His Church?

And the world, too, admits the importance of the future, and in its actual and present defeats by the Church, it pretends to be comforting itself by its future triumphs, and by the proximate destruction of that which Almighty God has declared to be indestructible. The world is always prophesying well of itself, and is foreboding ill of the Church. No doubt upon the day of the Crucifixion of our Blessed Lord, the world not only rejoiced in the triumph of that day, but also gloried in the future that attended upon it. And as it put to death one Apostle and Martyr after another, it was exulting in its victory, and hoping that it was securing a safe and easy future for itself. It has been so in every age. Hear what St. Augustine said fourteen centuries ago, speaking about the enemies of the Church, who were then pretending to tell of its future. "They now see the Church, and they say: She will soon die, and her name will disappear. There will soon be no more Christians; they have had their day. And whilst they are saying this, I see them dying every day; and still the Church keeps alive, and announces the power of God to all succeeding generations."* Yet what is the case? Does the presence of eight hundred Prelates assembled at the voice of the Head of the Church, prove that she is dead? She is being put to death constantly, most assuredly, but the persecutors' knife cannot find out her vital part. *The Life is in the Blood*, as Almighty God said to Moses; and the Precious Blood in which the Church was formed

* See Nicholas, *Etudes Philosophiques*, vol. ii. p. 604.

and perfected, goes on circulating still; and so the Church says : *We are being put to death, and yet behold we live.* So much for the prophecies of the world regarding the future of the Church.

The Church never denies, but is continually impressing upon us the truth, that we have duties towards the future, towards those that are to come after us. Progress, that word which is used so frequently by the enemies of the Church, as if it expressed their policy as opposed to the Church, implies the future: it implies a movement towards a point which is not yet attained. The Church never denies, but is always asserting the necessity of progress, both in the individual and in the whole Catholic body. The struggle of the individual towards perfection, which is not really attained in this world, but is ever to be aspired after, so much urged in the spiritual teaching of the Church, shows that she knows the necessity of ever moving forwards towards that more perfect way, and those better gifts of which the Apostle tells us that we ought ever to be zealous. (1 Cor. xii. 21.) And the gradual development of the Christian Faith throughout the world, beginning with *Jerusalem and Samaria*, and ending with *the uttermost bounds of the earth*, is the mission given to the Church—a mission of progress, and a mission which regards the future. The great question of education, upon which the Church is far more seriously solicitous than the world, and to which sufficient intimation has been given to us, that the Council will direct its anxious attention, regards the future; it is the paying by the present generation of the debt it owes to the future. Parents, above all, ought to know this, and to remember, that it is in

their children that they are living in the future, and that in their duties towards them they have a serious account which the future is to score against them, if they prove themselves negligent. Surely, my dear brethren, it is not an idle nor an useless occupation, then, to concern ourselves about what is to come after us, and in studying the great event of the Council to ask what will be its influence upon the future.

In answer to the question, we may first of all point to past Councils, and see how they have affected the future. For the future has always been a great object in every Council. Each of these assemblages of the Episcopate of the Church has brought together the experience of the past and present for the benefit of the future. When a Council has condemned actual error, it has condemned it once for all—it has condemned it for ever. The dogmatical decisions of an Œcumenical Council, being infallible, are immutable and irrevocable, and therefore they bind the future. They are for all places, and for all times. Look what the Council of Jerusalem did regarding the non-observance of the Old Ceremonial Law. It closed the question, and closed it for ever. Look what Nicæa, and Ephesus, and Chalcedon did in defence of that glorious Mystery of the Incarnation, which, at this Advent time is the object of thought and devotion throughout the whole Church. Those Councils defined for all times the meaning of the declaration of St. John regarding this Mystery: *Verbum caro factum est*. And when the privileged duty at any time devolves upon us to explain or to defend this article of our Faith, our hope and love, it is to the teaching in those Councils of St. Athanasius, St. Cyril, and St. Leo that we always

refer, with the same confidence and freshness, as if the questions had been debated and decided upon in our own presence.

And the disciplinary enactments, in which Councils are equally infallible, have always shown the future what was the teaching and practice of the Church at the time of their being decreed, and have, according to the intention of the Church, bound the future, when the matter was of such nature as to be for all time. Thus the first General Council of Nicæa decided for ever the time for the observance of the Paschal solemnity, that central Festival, which, throughout the whole Christian world, affects the day of the observance of the other moveable feasts of the year. And the last of the Œcumenical Councils—that of Trent—told so efficiently upon the future by its vigour in the enforcement of discipline, that it has well merited the gratitude of the three centuries which have elapsed, since it manifested its zeal in labouring for the perfection of every branch and order in the Church. The Episcopate, the Priesthood, the religious orders, the laity—all are still under its happy influence, and feel that they are living up to the perfection of their state, when they regulate their conduct by its salutary laws. How gloriously was the mark of Holiness in the Church illustrated by the Saints whom that Council really assisted in forming! The Chair of St. Peter has been occupied by a succession of Popes remarkable for their holiness and zeal for religion, one of them—St. Pius V.—being ranked in the Calendar of the Saints. The Episcopate has been honoured by St. Charles Borromeo, the zealous promoter of the Council during its last sessions, and the first to enforce its discipline in his diocese of

Milan. The Priesthood is able to show among its members such servants of God as St. Philip Neri, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis Xavier, and many others of the followers of St. Ignatius Loyola, who himself died during the period of the Council, after instituting that society which has ministered so efficiently towards the sanctity of the Church. And we may hope, certainly with good grounds for confidence, that the work of the Council of Trent will still continue, and be aided by the impulse which will be afforded by the present Council of the Vatican.

If it is the case, then, that in these days of little faith, when there is organised against the Church all the power that the world can command, we find a denial of the most elementary and primitive truths of religion, and a rebellion against principles upon which the peace and the morality of social life depend, it is to the teaching, the influence, and the example of the past Councils we refer for help in the time of trial. Those Councils are still affecting and defending the future. It is the fact of the blessings which have followed in their train that has suggested the summoning of the present Council, and its future is also to be marked by the benefits of which it is intended, in the designs of God, to be the source for generations to come. And, therefore, our Holy Father, in the Apostolical Letter in which he summons the Council, points to the example and authority of his predecessors, and declares his intention to do for the future, in arresting the progress of error, what the past has done for us. It is not a transitory benefit he is wishing to secure for the Church, but one that is to be permanent, and to last even to the end of time. An ambitious aim

it may seem ; but yet, as it has been prophesied that the Church is to last to the consummation of the world, and as it is to be ever going on progressing through the globe, the work of one of its Councils cannot be lost.

One of our English astronomers, in order to give an idea of the immensity of space, has not hesitated to venture the statement, that, although light travels with such great velocity as to be almost instantaneous, it is quite possible that there may be stars, at so vast a distance from the earth, that their light travelling from the day of creation, has not yet reached our planet ; but when once it should happen to attain to us, it would continue to shine like those other fixed stars, which glisten so brilliantly above us on these dark wintry nights. So when in the times appointed by His Wisdom, the Holy Spirit sends forth upon the Church an additional ray of light communicated through one of the Councils over which He presides, it will not just appear and then vanish again quickly, but will be for ever contributing to the office of the Church, in enlightening those that seek for peace and joy within the shelter of her home.

In its influence upon the future it is necessary to declare openly one thing which the Council will not do. It will not pretend to make known any newly revealed doctrine. For this is a point explained a thousand times, and yet constantly misunderstood or misrepresented by those who sit in judgment upon the Church, and accuse her of novelty, and of defining as a doctrine of Faith, what has not been revealed from the foundation of the Church. Whenever the Church, either in Council, or pronouncing infallibly out of a Council, upon a matter of doctrine, declares what is to be believed as of faith, she does not

pretend that a newly-revealed truth has been communicated to her, and through her promulgated to the world; but she declares what has been held from the Day of Pentecost in the deposit entrusted to her. She has the power, as a teacher appointed by God, to declare *explicitly* as circumstances may demand such a declaration, what had all along been *implicitly* believed. Even the Thirty-nine articles admit that the Church hath authority in controversies of faith (Art. xx.); and whenever the Church exercises that authority, which she undoubtedly possesses, of closing a controversy by a judicial act, she decides what must be accepted as a doctrine of faith, not pretending that a new revelation has been made, but only declaring what has been revealed from the beginning, though its explicit knowledge had not until then been so openly made known by her. Upon this point there are two charges which are made against us, each of which may be used to refute the other. We are accused of two contradictory faults. We are accused of our love for tradition, and are also accused of our introduction of novelties in doctrine, because of the dogmatical definitions of the Church on certain matters on which her judgment has been sought and pronounced. If we are lovers of tradition, then we are not lovers of novelty; and if we are favourers of novelty in doctrine, then we are not followers and lovers of tradition. The two do not co-exist in the same individual. The Church does love tradition, and treasures up the inspired words of St. Paul as addressed to herself: *The things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also.* (2 Tim. ii. 2.) And this very love of tradition is her security against novelty;

for she acts upon that other saying of St. Paul to the same disciple of his, St. Timothy : *Oh, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words.* (1 Tim. vi. 20.) So far is the Church resolute against all novelty, that it is she, not Protestants, that is pointed at and accused by the world of being in the way of progress, and of teaching doctrines which the world presumes to call too antiquated for these days of enlightenment. This, then, is what the Council will not do. It will teach no novelty.

Supposing it to be the case that there will be a dogmatical definition upon the question of the Infallibility of the Sovereign Pontiff, the Council will not pretend to be making the Pope anything more than he has been all along, since the days of St. Peter, but it will only declare what he has been, and what the Church has ever admitted in his regard. Terms will be defined; and the whole Catholic Church, with that instinct with which it is endowed, of accepting without doubt whatever the teaching authority communicates, will be found in perfect unity; not a single feeling will have suffered violence, because a clearer intimation will have been given of the meaning of our dear Lord when He appointed one to be His own Vicar, and said to Him : *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, &c.* Every Catholic knows that the Church is infallible: he knows that the Church has its Head upon earth, the visible Head of the visible Church; He knows that it is through the Head that the Body speaks, and that there cannot be any separation between the Head and the Body. And therefore if it seem good

to the Holy Ghost and the Council to instruct the children of the Church upon the question, which may possibly arise, we shall simply be like children who are receiving at the hands of one appointed to teach them, a clearer explanation of what their Catechism tells them.

The object for which the present Council is assembled ought of itself to gain for it from the future an eternal offering of gratitude, and it must, in generations to come, be held in constant benediction. In the opposition which it is making against infidelity and existing impiety, as it ought to conciliate to itself even now, the good-will of all who love God and hate iniquity, it will certainly gain this at the hands of those who come after us. The future will show itself more grateful than many of the critics of the Council show themselves to be now-a-days. Who is there that ought not to desire that God should be better known and loved, and that His cause should be vindicated against those who assail it? Who ought not, when they think of the blessings which Christianity has brought into the world, to desire its further spread and influence throughout the world? Who is there, when he remembers the great truths of Revelation, and how the *word of God is as a lamp to our feet and a light in our paths*, that would not stand up in defence of those truths, and wish that that word should be better heard, and more obediently followed by all men? Who, when he calls to mind how *Christ loved the Church*, as St. Paul reminds us, and *delivered Himself up for it that He might sanctify it* (Eph. v. 25), would not for the sake of the Founder of the Church, love His work and maintain its privileges? Who, when he knows that he has a soul to save, and that Sacraments have been instituted for the very purpose of

securing that salvation, would not seek to have those Sacraments valued, as the channels to our souls of the Precious Blood of Him, Who appointed them for our use and sanctification? Who also, when he bears in mind the honour with which Almighty God vouchsafes to treat His Saints, those marvels of His Grace, and those heroes of the Faith which is common to us all, but would be proud, through our very fraternity with them, to rank himself upon their side, and to uphold their claims upon the respect and love of all who hope to be one day associated with them in heaven? These, my dear brethren, are noble aspirations, high and glorious efforts; and they are the aspirations and will be the object of the efforts of the Council of the Vatican. And for these exertions the future ever will be and must be grateful.

And yet, now that the Council has only just commenced labours which have such a noble object in view, how ungenerously do we find it attacked, and every utterance which comes from it, criticised, censured, and condemned by those who do not hesitate to be pretending to place themselves upon the side of God, at the same time that they are withstanding the work which He Himself has been inaugurating! To the outspoken and revolting blasphemies, which have been pronounced and assumed as the very motto of the enemies of the Church, they have not a word of protest and censure to offer; but their eloquence and assumed indignation are all reserved for expressions which they cannot understand, and upon which they will not have the patience to become further instructed. During this last week you have had a striking instance of this shameless inconsistency. An un-

authorized telegram from Rome attributed to our Holy Father, when addressing the Council, the expression that "the Church is stronger than Heaven." No context is given which might explain the meaning of the expression, but it is accused of being a blasphemous statement, and many of the organs of the Press, especially that which is acknowledged the chief amongst them, emulating the zeal of the accusers of our Blessed Lord, who cried out : *He blasphemeth, what need we of any further evidence?* have devoted all their energy against this declaration, and have even assumed a tone of injured innocence and outraged piety. At the very same time was published, what was intended by him who wrote it, as a protest against all interference of religion in the concerns of mankind, an open declaration by a veteran French infidel, just chosen as the president of a professedly infidel society, that the motto of that society should be, "to be born without a priest, to be married without a priest, to die and be buried without a priest,"* thus binding themselves to exclude religion from any influence over the commencement, the progress, and the end of life. And this is a declaration which will have influence against faith and morality. Why could not some indignation be reserved in condemnation of such impiety, and why could not a few words of sober and honest reprobation be enregistered against what so loudly calls for the abhorrence of all good men? Though every paper prints this unmistakable affirmation of infidelity, it is in vain that you will seek for a leading article, or perhaps a word even of censure. And yet that which had been so violently condemned as a blasphemous assertion of the

* Answer of Raspail to the Free-Thinkers of Lyons.

good and holy Pontiff, whose own virtues and piety even the bitterest malice has not been able to deny or question, turns out, when time had been given for a more accurate version to reach us, to have been but a commentary of St. John Chrysostom upon that expression of our Blessed Lord, in which He certainly does give to His own word, and therefore to the Church which contains it, a kind of indefectibility greater even than that which has been given to heaven, as a part of God's creation : *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away.** (Matt. xxiv. 35.) Surely, this will help to prove to the future that the present Council is sharing with every other work of the Church, the censure of the world, which is a clear sign of the blessing of God.

The Council will also prove to the future how in the nineteenth century, in spite of every effort to coerce her action, the Church was a great reality, and was able to show herself as such in her resistance to the usurpations and tyranny of the world. It will prove that the office of the Watchman of Ezechiel has been zealously exercised, and that in days of little belief and much worldly influence, the Church was not silent, nor submissive to the dictation of the world. The accounts of this magnificent demonstration upon the part of the Church, which have been written in such unfair and angry spirit by the paid panderers to popular prejudice in this country, if they ever reach the future, will prove by their tone that at the time of the gathering of the Council, the work of Balaam was undertaken by those who were willing, for a temporal reward, to distort facts and to curse, when in

* See the whole passage in the "Liturgical Year" of Abbot Guéranger, Christmas vol. ii. p. 454, of Father Shepherd's translation.

their conscience they knew that they ought to bless. Only, such writers have not had the protecting Spirit which ruled over that prevaricating Prophet, and which made him, in spite of himself, declare the truth. They are willing to do what Balaam seemed willing to do, but could not. He was bribed to curse Israel, but he blessed that people of God. These men are bribed to curse, and they do it. But, in spite of themselves, now and then the truth will come out, and they cannot help expressing their wonder at a work, for which they cannot account upon any human principles. The Council is proving to the present generation, and will prove to every future generation, how in these days the Episcopate has been united to the Chief Pontiff, and how he has loved the Episcopate; and how therefore both have shared the same fate, and have received together the tribute of the world's condemnation.

It will prove what Churches are Catholic and orthodox, and how those who have pretended to that glorious name of Catholic have, when unaccepted by the Council, proved their own inability to bear that name. With regard to our own kingdom of England, it will manifest how those, who hold the names of the Sees once orthodox and united to Rome, have been unrecognised in an assembly of the Episcopate of the Universe, and how others, with titles assigned by the Holy See, have succeeded to privileges confiscated by a disobedient and rejected hierarchy. Westminster will be in place of Canterbury. At Trent but one of the old hierarchy attended; but at the Vatican, a goodly number of the newly-constituted province of Westminster will be found gathered with their brethren, the sharers of the solicitude of the Chief Pastor of the

Church. And we can well imagine how this will afford an occasion for more abundant and more fervent prayers than usual, in behalf of our separated brethren, that one future consequence of the Council may be, the bringing back again of this country, once the island of Saints, to the fold of Unity, and attaching it once more to the rock whence it has been severed. And as Judas Machabeus, on the eve of a great victory over the Jewish Church, was strengthened by a vision, in which he saw Saints who had been gathered to their rest *praying much for the people* (2 Mac. xv. 14), so may we encourage ourselves by the assurance, that the Saints of Canterbury—Augustine, Anselm, Thomas, and Edmund—will be praying much for the people of a land, which they so loved on earth, and must still be loving and watching over from heaven ! Day and night does our Holy Father, as he declares in a special letter, pray that those in separation may return and be gathered into their true home in the bosom of the Church. May the future prove that such prayers have been heard !

Are we hoping against hope when we cheer ourselves on by the prospect of the blessings which the Council will entail, in the curbing of the spirit of impiety, and in bringing back nations to the Faith ? If it were merely an act and effort of human policy, such as have been the intended and frustrated Congresses of Europe, we might despair of success. But if it is the work of God, who is to despair ? If God be with us, we say again with St. Paul, what matters it who is against us, and what is the obstacle we are called upon to surmount ? The hearts of men and the destinies of nations are in His hands, and it is in His power to turn and sway them as He will. When

nations have been *in darkness and in the shadow of death*, He has raised up those who have enlightened and converted them, and what He has once done He can do again. The Council is convened, and is praying, and labouring for the enlightenment and conversion of those who are in need of such a grace, and it feels confident of its own prospect of success. It is not for us then, to be faint-hearted and to despond, when our leaders and our fathers are marching nobly forward to the victory. If, as we know to be the case, the Council is called by God, is presided over by the Holy Spirit, is holding its sessions in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, of Him who said: *Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*, if it is gathered around the shrine of the heroic SS. Peter and Paul, if it is inaugurated and supported by prayer, if it is attended by the anointed Princes of the Church, who have come from every nation under the sun, enriched with all the learning, and adorned with all the virtues which have ever been the portion of the Catholic Episcopate—then it must have a glorious future, for it is evident that *the hand of the Lord is with it*.

And what are we to say, or rather what are we to prove, regarding the influence of the Council upon our own future. It must have the consequence of making us more fervent and loyal, more than ever devoted to the cause of God and His Church. If, after its labours and prayers in our behalf, we do not become more faithful children of God, more zealous members of the Church, more determined defenders of the powers, the rights and the privileges of our Holy Father the Pope, more outspoken and less timid in the profession of our glorious Faith, more generous in making sacrifices for the good of

religion, more loving partakers of the Holy Sacraments, and more persevering pursuers of all spiritual duties; if it will not make us, of the Clergy, more zealous for the salvation of souls, and more cautious about our own spiritual perfection, its success in our regard will be less complete than it ought to be, and we shall have done something towards frustrating its hopes and its auguries of a glorious future. But this cannot, and it must not, be the case. Through the head and heart of the Church, life and vigour will affect every member; and even the dry bones, seen in vision by the Prophet Ezechiel, will again be clothed with flesh, and they shall receive the spirit, and shall live, and know who is the Lord.

The most practical question, after all, for us to consider is, how will this Council affect each of us individually, and pursue us in its future consequences, even into eternity. It brings a responsibility, beyond any doubt, upon each one of us. It shows each one, and shows him in a clear, unmistakable light, where is the Church. Remember the words of Simeon, which I have already brought before your mind, spoken about that Divine Child, the Founder of the Church, that He was to be set up even for the fall of many. And there are words of His own, spoken by that Child in later years of manhood, when He had manifested Himself to men, and was doing His work openly and strikingly, words which are astonishing, and which must have sounded fearfully to those who heard them, as they do to us who read them: *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. . . If I had not done amongst them the works which no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both Me and*

My Father. (John xv. 22—24.) Our Blessed Lord is here speaking of the consequence of rejected graces. Why was He rejected? Many were drawn from Him by the influence of the world. Men spoke ill of Him: the finger of scandal pointed at Him: and men loved darkness rather than the light. Why is the Church rejected? Why is the Council rejected? There are found men who will speak ill of it, and who draw disciples after them. But in spite of everything, there it is. It stands forward as a fact, a truth, and a light. It is intended for the resurrection of all, though it may also prove an occasion of the fall of many.

Let it not be so with you. Be loyal to it, if you are Catholics. Be fair and just to it, even if you are not. And what a happiness will it be for you, in the future eternity to which you are speeding on, to be singing your songs of thanksgiving in the courts of Heaven, for all the graces and blessings of which it will have been to you the rich and generous source. There, for all the days of my life shall I be singing the praises of God, in return for all that the Council will have done in my behalf. What it did for me, was this. It showed me the Church: it showed me Unity: it gave me a fixed certainty: it gave me Faith: it put me on my way to Heaven: it secured for me the possession of God: and has it not with Him given me all things! May there be many that will join in this act of thanksgiving, and may there be many, even amongst those here present! Then will you sing, in the fulness of your joy, what we have sung this evening in one of the beautiful Vesper Psalms: CONFITEBOR TIBI DOMINE IN TOTO CORDE ME0, IN CONCILIO JUSTORUM, ET CONGREGATIONE.

LECTURE XII.

THE DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL TOWARDS US. OUR DUTIES TOWARDS THE COUNCIL.

Gathering together the multitude, they delivered the Epistle; which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.—ACTS xv: 30, 31.

THIS was the last and crowning act of the Council of Jerusalem. It was an outward proof of the success of the work which had been undertaken by the Apostles, when they and the elders of the Christian Church assembled together to consider upon the matter of dispute which had arisen, and which by their authority they so effectually decided. I brought before you, in some fulness of detail, at the commencement of the course of lectures which I am concluding this evening, what plan it was that the Apostles adopted and pursued in a debated question; and how they established a model and a sanction for future similar occasions. They summoned a Council, which was presided over by their chief: they discussed the question, and gave an opportunity for both sides to argue and to be heard: they came to a practical conclusion which was unanimously agreed to: they published that conclusion under the joint names of the Holy Ghost and themselves; and sending special messengers with their encyclical letter, to the Churches which were most effected by the question at issue, these messengers on their arrival, *gathering together the multitude, delivered the Epistle; which when they had read, they rejoiced for the*

consolation. This has always been the consequence of a Council to the faithful children of the Church. Its effect has been to remove difficulties: to quiet apprehensions and anxieties: to comfort the sorrows of many who have been afflicted, because of evils which have seemed to threaten the peace of the Church; and it has been followed by the blessing of peace, and by the conquest of those who have dared to stand up in opposition to the cause of God.

I can well imagine what was the thought that occupied the mind of the learned and holy Bishop, who was appointed to preach the inaugural sermon of the present Council. For, when on the Festival of the Immaculate Conception, standing in the midst of the assembled Fathers, he took for his text the last verses of Psalm cxxv: *Going they went and wept scattering their seed; but coming they shall come in joy carrying their sheaves;* he must have thought of the times of trial and anxiety which have preceded the various Councils of the Church, the time of sorrow and weeping; and of the peace and triumph over evil, which have ever followed their deliberations, the time of joy and congratulation. For the history of the Church is the history of a struggle; it records a continual contest against the spirit of evil, which is always trying to gain the ascendancy, but which, by the watchful vigour of the Church, is kept in check, and is being constantly subdued. The time of the contest is a time of trial: then follows a time of peace and rest. So said our Blessed Lord in words which are repeatedly meeting with their fulfilment: *You shall have sorrow, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* Such is to be the case with the present Council. It certainly has

been preceded by a time of hard and bitter sorrow and anxiety; for no one who loves God and his Church can help lamenting over the efforts of impiety by which the last few years have been distinguished. But the Church has prepared herself for the battle; she has called her forces together, and with the special aid from Heaven, which a Council always secures, she looks forward with confidence to a happy result. And we, too, my dear brethren, all of us are engaged in the conflict, and interested in the issue. We are called upon to declare upon which side we stand—upon the side of God against evil, or upon the side of evil against God. It is time for us to understand what are our duties with reference to the great fact of the Council; and these we shall see perhaps more clearly, when we first know what are the duties which the Council has undertaken towards us.

The Council, by the very fact of its being convened, admits that it has duties to perform. It is not a mere idle demonstration; but it is a gathering of the powers of the Church in support of a holy cause. It affirms the principle which, in the Catholic Church at least, is never denied, that privileges imply duties, and that the possession of power implies a responsibility for its use. And it is not an act of presumption upon our part, children of the Church as we are, and subject to those who form the the Council, to say that those who are assembled thus together, have their duties to perform in our regard. Even Almighty God Himself, the great and independent Creator and Lord of the Universe, has not hesitated to take duties upon Himself, and to bind Himself by laws which He Himself has enacted towards His creatures. His sanctity, His truth, His justice, His mercy, regulate

Him in His dealings towards us. He gives us His word, and He promises to keep it: He gives us commandments, and He binds Himself to reward us according to our fidelity in their observance. He encourages us to return to Him by repentance, and authorizes us to blame Him even, if He does not receive us to pardon, as if He were wanting in His duty. *Come and accuse Me*, He vouchsafes to say: *If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.* (Is. i. 18.)

And when the Only-begotten Son of God, equal to His Father, came into this world for our redemption, He came with duties upon Him. *He was made obedient*; and what else does this signify, except that there was a law over Him to which He became willingly subject, when He said: *Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God?* and which He affirmed to those to whom He was teaching a similar duty of obedience, when He set His own example before them, and said: *I have come, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that hath sent Me.* At the time of this happy Christmas Festival, you have not far to travel to see how fully He acquitted Himself of His duty. Your thoughts and your heart are in Bethlehem; and when you ask why the Sacred Infant, whom you there see, was born in such suffering, and surrounded by such signs of poverty and abandonment, there is a short answer which explains it. It was His duty. It was the will of His Father, and He came to do that will.

And when He said to His Apostles, the first Pastors of His Church: *I have set you an example, that as I have done, you should do in like manner*, He imposed upon them the law of obedience, the obligation of fulfilling duties. To the Church is committed the care of the out-

ward glory of God upon earth, and it has duties towards that ; to the Church is committed the charge of its own privileges and rights, and it has duties towards those ; to the Church is committed the care of souls, and it has duties towards them ; to the Church is committed the care of society itself, its peace and welfare, and it has duties here also. Hear the words of St. Paul, in which, in addressing the elders of Ephesus, in his farewell words to them, he is asserting the existence of a duty, not peculiar to them, but incident to their office, and therefore incumbent upon all who hold that office : *Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock over which the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood.* (Acts xx. 28.) And, again, he bids us obey our Prelates, and be subject to them : *For they watch, as being to render an account of your souls* (Heb. xiii. 17), declaring, in these last words, their duty and their responsibility. Certainly the Church never wishes to shrink from the knowledge and fulfilment of its responsibility. Each of its pastors is always filled with a sense of what is incumbent upon him, remembers what it is to bear the pastoral solicitude, and is impressed with the necessity of aiming at a greater perfection in what St. Gregory calls “the art of arts, the governing of souls.” And as the Council is the aggregate of the chief Pastors of the Church, it may be called an aggregate of responsibility, and has the very highest and most responsible office devolving upon it. A sense of responsibility is always an incentive to zeal. It makes indolence an impossibility ; and the office of the Watchman, in Ezechiel xxxiii., to which I have already had occasion to allude, is allied with the pressure of those

duties from which there can be no escape. When St. Paul said that *he who desires the office of a Bishop desires a good work*, he had in his mind, as the Holy Spirit then suggested to him, the presence of all those high and sacred duties which such watchmen are always bound to discharge.

The first duty which devolves upon the Council is its duty to God. And though I am in reality speaking only of the duties of the Council towards us, I must not exclude this responsibility which is upon it. It owes duties to God for our sake. It is between ourselves and God. God has called it together to defend His honour and glory, so outraged and so impiously attacked, but to defend it for our sake. What matters it to Him? How can it affect His essential glory or interfere with His happiness, that His own ungrateful creatures, the work of His hands, one day to be judged by Him, and, if they die impenitent, to be condemned and punished by Him—what can it matter to Him that they dare to stand up against Him, and proclaim their independence, and take the motto of the arch-rebel: *I will not serve? He who dwelleth in the heavens will laugh them to scorn*, as the Psalmist declares. But it does matter to us. It is our God who is attacked; and we are all roused, in our indignation, to become like so many Michaels, and to cry out: *Quis ut Deus?* Who is like unto God? If His existence, His dominion over His own creation, His revelation, His attributes, are questioned and attacked, it does concern us, and it concerns those that are dear to us. The progress of infidelity concerns all of us very closely; and it is to save us from its aggression, to save society from its influence, to save the very authors of such wickedness,

and to rescue them from the fearful consequences of their pernicious principles, that the Council gives the voice of warning and stands forward in the defence. In supporting the mysteries of religion, and the principles and truths of Christianity, against their assailants, it is protecting us, as a parent protects its child against the danger of poison, or screens it from the approach of a fatal contagion.

The next duty of the Council is towards the Church. It is a duty of self-defence; for the Council is the Church. The Church is the guardian of a sacred deposit, and it must watch over its safe custody. She has received a Mission from God, and she must execute it. *Behold I send you*, our Blessed Lord said to the Church, when He sent her upon that Mission. Her Mission is into the very midst of danger, for she is sent *as lambs into the midst of wolves*. No wonder, then, that under such circumstances the Church is bound to be on the watch against dangers which are ever imminent. And here, in speaking of the duties of the Council towards the Church, which are also duties towards us, because we are of the Church, I might in a few words remind you of what, in this course of instructions, I have brought before you. It was a duty to the Church which made the Apostles and elders assemble in Jerusalem, to consider upon a matter which affected the integrity of Faith and the uniformity of Discipline, as I explained at the very commencement. It is a duty of the Church to preserve Orthodoxy of doctrine, and to supply a test whereby it can be proved; and it is the true Church, alone, as we saw afterwards, which is always sensitive upon this point, and which is zealous and successful in applying such a test, as is

supplied by an Œcumenical Council. These Councils of the Church have ever done this in the past; and we saw how, in the Creeds which the Church on such occasions has promulgated, she faithfully fulfilled the duties which in this regard she owed to her children, and to those who wished to inquire what was her faith and practice. We then directed our thoughts towards those two distinctive marks of the true Church, Unity and Catholicity, which a Council brings into such prominent relief, and which it demonstrates at the same time to be without the reach of any other body which would venture to claim them. And if at any time error became more than usually vigorous in its assault upon the Church, and the gates of hell strove with unwonted efforts to prevail against her, the Church has done her duty by the loudest protest of one of her general assemblies. Again: we saw how the world, the old and constant enemy and antagonist of the Gospel and the Church, always found in a Council a most efficient check and resistance. And as error, and the world which is the friend of error, are now exerting unusual efforts, we examined what the present Council was prepared to do in defence of the holy cause of God and His truth, and were filled with confidence that the expectations raised by its preparation could not and would not be frustrated. The Council was ready to do its duty; and, more than that, we now see it in the actual performance of that duty. We looked forward also to the future, and saw how the Council recognised its duties towards future generations, and towards our own individual future, in the labours which it has so loyally undertaken towards correcting present evils, and thus preventing their further spread

and influence. Thus does the Council recognise, and thus does it fulfil, its duties towards the Church, and through the Church towards ourselves.

Individually, to each of us, does the Council admit and gladly discharge its duties. Just as with the angels of God, whom He has appointed as *ministering spirits, to minister to those who are to receive the inheritance of salvation* (Heb. i. 14), there is not only a general interest amongst them, which manifests itself in their joy upon the repentance of a sinner, but there is a special care in their guardianship over each one of us, so have the Councils, not only a general duty towards all the children of the Church, but a particular care over each of us. I shall, in a few moments, have to explain our duties, the duties of each one of us, towards the Council. And as these duties are of a relative nature, and are reciprocal, the Council does for the individual something which binds the individual in his duty towards it. And as Almighty God, in caring for the whole universe, which is the work of His hands, and is ever under His watchful government, yet watches over each soul, and knows and treasures up the single actions of each, as if this were but the only one He had to keep under His charge, and gives His commandments in the singular to each: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God: thou shalt not kill: thou shalt not steal, &c.*; so will the Council show its personal solicitude in our regard, and through our Prelates who have responsibility over us, bring home to each of us its instructions and its enactments in faith and morality.

Even to those who are, unhappily, outside the Church, and do not recognise her authority over them, though she claims it over all by virtue of the universal power given

to her, even to such as these, the Council has its duties, and it is ready to undertake them fearlessly, but affectionately. The Pope is the Father of human society, as well as of the Church, for he is the Vicar of Christ, who *is the Head of all principality and power* (Col. ii. 10); and for this reason, the Church, ever anxious, as was her Holy Founder, about those *other sheep* which are not yet of the fold, is extending her solicitude over them, and eager to bring them into the One Fold of the One Shepherd. The Council, indeed, is already doing its work towards this happy end. To those, both members of the Eastern separated Church, and members of Protestant Churches nearer home, whom the Holy Father has invited to avail themselves of the occasion of the Council to return to Unity, this duty has been shown, and, if unavailing with some, it has not been so with all, and in the end, we hope, will have shown itself to have been the means of the resurrection of many. Jansenist Bishops from Holland, after a separation of two centuries, have gone over to Rome to make overtures towards submission. Anglican clergymen, in good numbers, have gone, not through mere curiosity, or with a view of being edified; but they have gone like the shepherds to Bethlehem, to *see the word that has come to pass*, and are being influenced by the evidence which is forcing itself upon them. And even those who have not left their homes, but merely have heard, in a course of instructions, or from other sources, what are the high motives which have suggested the Council, and how nobly it is representing the Church of Christ, have been gained in many instances to recognise its claims, and to submit to the Church. Even here, in our own happy congre-

gation, the labours of your own pastors have not been fruitless; but, by the blessing of God's grace, more converts have been gained since the argument of the Council has been placed before you, than perhaps in any similar period since the consecration of our Church.

And as if to throw into still bolder relief the faithful discharge of the duties which the Church owes towards her own Unity, and which she is acquitting herself of in the eyes of the whole world in the Council, it has pleased Almighty God, in His wise Providence, to have allowed that striking evidence of disunion in the English Church to be going on coincidently with it, which in this very last week has been completed. Notwithstanding all protests, and charges of heresy and infidelity brought against him, by Bishops, Archdeacons, and others of the Clergy and laity, the Bishop-designate of Exeter has undergone the Anglican form of consecration, and is now numbered amongst the Prelates of the Church established in this kingdom. This, surely, ought to serve as an evidence of the total want of unity in such a Church, and must go very far in increasing the want of confidence with which its Bishops are regarded by the people. Place side by side, the eight hundred Prelates now doing their glorious work in Rome, and those who form the Episcopate of the Anglican Church, and what a contrast is presented! The former, drawn together under the Holy Spirit, by the voice of obedience, are showing to the whole world the Unity and Catholicity of the Church which they represent. The latter, unrecognised abroad, and suspected at home, are showing by the total absence of these qualities, that it can have no claim to be considered as the One Church of Christ.

We have thus far seen something of the duties of the Council towards us. We now have to ask, and to answer, a practical question: What are our duties towards the Council? We must have duties towards it, and it is important to know and to practise them. For the very reason that the Council acknowledges its duties in our regard, and acquits itself of them so efficiently, it has a claim upon us. The Council represents the Church: it is doing for us what our Blessed Lord intended His Church to be always doing for our spiritual good: it is between us and Almighty God, appointed by Him to legislate and labour for us, and therefore it is for His sake we owe to it all that it claims at our hands.

First of all we owe obedience to the Council. The law which binds subjects to superiors in the Catholic Church is the law of obedience. We have repeatedly had to enforce that maxim of St. Paul: *Obey your Prelates, and be subject to them, for they watch over you, being to render an account of your souls.* You owe the obedience of your life and outward conduct to its enactments of discipline, as far as the Council will declare them to be binding upon you, and when they are made known to you by those whose duty it will be to communicate them to you. You owe the obedience of your intellect, which is the obedience of Faith, to whatever decrees it may seem good to the Holy Ghost and the Council to promulgate in matters of Faith. And this obedience you owe, of course, because of your duty to the Church, which the Council represents, and which you are bound to hear and follow as you hope for salvation. But remember, that this obedience you owe even now. You are bound antecedently to the promulgation of the decrees of the Council, whatever they

may be, to accept them with the respect and submission due to the oracles of God. You are not to wait that you may judge and pronounce for yourself, whether these decrees will be in accordance with your own wishes and judgment; but whatever they may be, your principle must be this, that even now, beforehand, you accept them, and will obey them. Just as Samuel was instructed by the high priest, Heli, our duty is to say to Almighty God, speaking to us through the Council: *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*. You can, assuredly, see the reason for so acting, and can at once answer any objection which might be raised against this antecedent obedience, by those who may pretend to charge you with being weak-minded, or with sacrificing your independence of judgment in such ready and compliant submission. Your motive of faith is in question; and the authority of the Church enters into that motive. You are satisfied that the Church is infallible, and you must therefore accept whatever the Church proposes to you. You state this in your act of Faith, when, after enumerating certain articles, you add this form: "Moreover, I believe whatsoever else the Catholic Faith proposes to be believed; and this, because God, who is the Sovereign Truth, which can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed all these things to this Church."

If, therefore, any one should bring it as a charge against you, as is sure to be the case, that you are unreasonable in pinning your faith to articles of which at present you may be utterly ignorant, and that it is against the advice and command of St. Paul, who admonishes that your *service* should be *reasonable* (Rom. i. 12), it cannot be difficult for you to show that that faith alone

is reasonable, and answers the meaning of faith, which is grounded upon a motive which excludes doubt, and which extends equally to every single article which we are called upon to believe. Is not the service of a child to a parent a *reasonable service*, which is practised cheerfully and confidently upon every command which is given, when the child has once been convinced and knows instinctively that the parent will never order anything that is contrary to conscience. And if I ask you, as you may ask such an objector, do you not believe everything that is contained in the Sacred Scripture, and are you not disposed, beforehand, to believe everything, even in portions which you may not yet have read? What else can you answer, but that such is your faith in the inspiration of the Holy Word of God, that you bow down with the fullest and most hearty submission to every word which thus cometh forth from the mouth of God? When a good parent says to a child, as our good mother the Church says to us, giving us the Sacred Scriptures: Take this Book, my child, love and venerate it, because it is the Word of God; believe every article of faith which is contained therein; and practise as perfectly as you can every lesson which it teaches. When, I would ask you—when does a child believe the Bible? Is it only after reading it? Does the child, whilst reading it, believe only as far as he has gone, and suspend his belief upon portions as yet unread? Or does he read with such a disposition that he is willing to believe all that he can understand, but that he will hesitate and disbelieve whenever he may meet with anything that may seem strange or difficult to accept? Upon persons who would read the Sacred Scriptures with such a disposition, so disloyal and

suspicious towards the very Word of God Himself, St. Augustine has expressed the opinion of every reasonable Christian, when he says: "You who in the Gospel believe what you please, and disbelieve what you please, are not believing the Gospel, but yourselves."

The assent and obedience also which you are bound to pay to the decrees of the Council, is not to be simply an outward reluctant obedience, which you would pay, as if it were imposed upon you as a penalty, but you must give to them your interior assent. Faith resides in the soul, not in the body. Both the understanding and the heart have their office to fulfil in an act of Faith; and as the Council speaks in the name and with the authority of God, you must give to its utterances upon faith and morals, the tribute which Almighty God asks from you, when He says: *Son, give Me thy heart*. As Faith excludes doubt, and is the very contradictory of doubt, it implies a full and confident bending down of the understanding, and a ready and loving tribute of the heart, to whatever is proposed to us by the authority appointed by God. To give an outward submission, but reserve the inward assent, would be giving to God the body without the soul; or at most it would be dividing our heart, and offering to God what He will never accept—a divided heart. We either do believe that a Council is infallible, or we do not. If we do believe it (as every Catholic must believe, inasmuch as the Council represents the Church, which is infallible), then there is the reason why it demands that interior assent which constitutes an act of Faith. If we do not believe it, then we are renouncing Catholic Faith altogether, and I should then have to argue with you upon principles, which it is not in my

province to urge at present, as I am on this point addressing myself to you, who are glad to be members of the One Catholic Church.

Something more than this is also demanded at your hands, my Catholic brethren, as a duty to the Council. If you are true to your Church and your God, you owe to the Council not your assent and obedience only, but your loyalty also. You are not to be led away by a false liberalism, and to think that you are showing yourselves to be generous in your feelings towards others, by joining in any of those criticisms which the world is now so freely and recklessly passing upon this work of God. Do remember that there is such a sentiment as honour which holds good in religion as elsewhere. What value would you set upon the profession of friendship of one who, when your character might be attacked, would sit passively listening to the imputation of unworthy motives, or to charges of discreditable conduct made upon you, or would even join in encouraging suspicions against your integrity? Do you look upon the Church as a mother, and can you allow her to be attacked, and her honour questioned and denied, and you sit in cowardly silence, or compromising assent to such charges? The Council has assailants enough from those outside the Church, without your adding in any way to the ungenerous assaults made upon her. When the press in this country is attacking the Council day after day, there is some danger of a wrong impression being made with regard to it; but the danger is only in proportion to your cowardice and want of principle. The very fact of its being assailed, ought to call for your zeal in its defence. And a poor, craven,

weak-hearted, disloyal, undutiful subject and child must you be, if you can allow the Church to be condemned and dishonoured, and you remain passive and unmoved in her behalf. Do not forget that you are bound to be just towards the Church, before you are generous towards her enemies. I am speaking to you to-night on the Festival of St. Stephen, the first Martyr of the Church. He certainly was no compromiser; when being charged with being a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, he, in his turn, accused his enemies with being His betrayers and murderers. We sadly lack his spirit now-a-days; but what a contrast to his noble soul is that soft compliance with falsehood which loves to call itself liberalism! Look at the example of our Holy Father himself, the brave and glorious Pius the Ninth, now happily presiding over the Council, which he has succeeded in bringing into existence in the face of the most cruel and ungenerous opposition! What can you ever have to undergo for the Church in comparison with the wrongs and persecutions which have been heaped upon him? And are you not compounding with treason, when you allow his cause to be attacked, and perhaps even encourage those who speak evil against him? Bear in mind, then, that there is a question of your loyalty on all these occasions; and loyalty certainly is a duty you owe to the Church.

And still one more duty must I urge upon you, my Catholic brethren, towards your own Church assembled in Council. You may remember that when the time of the Passion of our dearest Saviour was drawing nigh, He found it necessary to caution His followers against being scandalized in His regard, when they would see the de-

gree to which He would be humbled, and how He would seem to be quite in the power and at the mercy of His enemies. There was a fear that they might, in the abjectness of His Humanity, forget His Divinity, and might yield to the feelings of human respect, and by their pusillanimity add even to the bitterness of His sufferings. You know how much the caution was needed, and how true was the prophetic declaration of our Blessed Lord on the night before His death, when He said: *All of you will be scandalized in Me this night.* The Council is now before the world, what our Lord was before His enemies: it is held up as an object of reproach. Now, your duty is not to be scandalized; not to think ill of the Council, because the world speaks ill of it. You ought to be prepared to hear objections against it. It would not give a sign of its being the work of God, if it did not share in the reproach which the world is always heaping upon Him. It has this in common with every truth of religion, that it is open to objections that may be and will be started against it. The glorious Mystery of the Incarnation, now the object of our special devotion, the Mystery of the Adorable Trinity, the Mystery of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the very Mystery of the existence of God—do you not know that all these have had their impugnors and objectors? And are they untrue and to be rejected, because some have been found bold and impious enough to argue and write against them? Think of the poor crib and the ruinous stable of Bethlehem, around and within which all your hearts are now gathered together, and you will see how our Blessed Lord was treated when He came into this world. *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.* Be

not surprised if it is exactly the same with the Council. It is assembled for the good of the world; but the world knows it not, and will not receive it. But it is your duty to be upon your guard; not to be led by the world, but to be prepared to find it, as it has taken care to show itself, opposed as it always is, to the cause of God and His Church.

And to any amongst you, my dear brethren, who may not be members of the Catholic Church, who cannot understand the necessity of the Council, and are not inclined to sympathise with it, to you also I have a word to say upon the duties which even you owe to the Council. I have not hesitated to say that the Council has duties towards you, and I have declared and shown to you how it is prepared zealously and affectionately to discharge those duties. And for this very reason you have duties towards it. I must say, what may seem to be bold, and yet, however bold, I do say it, that you cannot claim exemption from these duties; and they are binding, solemnly binding, upon your conscience. Because you do not recognise the authority of the Council, is that a plea of exemption from its claims upon you? Because *the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God*, is there no God? And in the government of the world is Almighty God to pass over unnoticed those who thus dare to deny His existence? Or, on the awful day of the General Judgment of the world, are those who have dared to stand up against Him, to escape judgment, whilst those alone who have bowed down before the great God of the universe, are to be tried according to their works? Will not, rather, the very fact of that denial be brought up as a charge against such infidels, and make them objects of

the anger of Him, Whom they have pretended to ignore? And, in like manner, I ask, because some deny the authority of the Council, does it prevent its being a Council, and if a Council, the representative of the Church, and of God, Who speaks and deals with us through His Church? The Council is too great a fact to be ignored, and it is not ignored. As the infidel acknowledges the existence of God at the very time that he blasphemes against Him, so does the world admit the reality of the Council, in the fact of opposing it. Your duty is to treat the Council as a fact, and against this no ignorance can be brought upon your part as an excuse for dealing with it unjustly. You are bound to treat it with fairness and justice, and if you do not, you certainly will have one day to answer for it.

One of the greatest champions of the Catholic Church, against those who are opposed to it in this country, has stated, and has proved that Fable is the basis of the Protestant view, and that true testimony will not answer the demands of those who resist the Church. Never could those statements be better illustrated than in the manner in which the great event of the Council has been treated by those who are employed in the Press of this country in giving testimony in its regard. The testimony is fabulous and is untrue. Again and again it has been shown to be so, and yet stories that are told are believed, and are perpetuated and distributed by the circulation given to them. You may remember, my dear brethren, and listen, because it worth recalling to your mind, how you read in the Book of Numbers (chap. xiii.), that when Moses sent twelve spies to view the promised land, at the time that

the Israelites were close upon its borders, what was the result of their visit, and the testimony which they bore. They went into it from a desert, in which they had been wearied out by the trials and privations of a forty years' pilgrimage; and as Moses was eager to hasten on the stiff-necked people over whom he was ruling, by holding before their eyes a view of the rich and fertile land destined for them, and now so close within their reach, he appointed twelve messengers, who were to go over and view the land, and to come back and give their testimony. What did they see, and what did they say? They saw a land flowing with milk and honey: so luxurious in its produce, that a single bunch of grapes served as a burden for two men to carry; and there was everything about it that ought to have answered the purpose of the wise lawgiver, when he felt that a true description of its blessings would stimulate the pilgrims on their onward journey. But what was their testimony? Ten out of the twelve gave false testimony. They described it as a land of giants, who devoured all its inhabitants; and, with apparently no other motive but that they would cling to their own way, rather than move forward in an united and obedient body, they dissuaded their comrades from going to take possession of it, and counselled them rather to remain and perish in the wilderness, or return back to the slavery of Egypt. No wonder that Moses and Aaron, on hearing these false witnesses, fell flat upon the ground, as if struck down with wonder, and that Josue and Caleb, the two who told the truth, and described the land as it really was, rent their garments in dismay. My dear brethren—exactly the same is occurring now. Out of all those who are sent as representatives of our

Press into the land, which shows itself by unmistakable signs, to be the home of Faith, loved and blessed by God, ten out of twelve give false testimony. They pervert the truth; they invent and spread fables; they show that true testimony is unequal to their cause, and they try to prevent, by misrepresentation, the immense moral power which the Council, as an argument, is calculated to exercise. Do not believe their testimony. The very tone in which they write, the palpable contradictions into which they are constantly falling, ought to make you suspect their evidence. God will, beyond a doubt, call them to an account for their untruthfulness; and He will call you to an account also, if you allow yourself, against the better feelings of fairness and honesty which you must possess, to believe falsehood rather than the truth.

And now, my dear brethren, having said thus much upon the relative duties between the Council and yourselves, it only remains for me to exhort you to be as faithful and zealous, on your part as you will find the Council in the discharge of the high and holy office which Almighty God has imposed upon it. It will not suffice for you to know your duty: you must also fulfil it. I have asked obedience, fervour, and loyalty from some: I demand fairness and justice from all. It is the Church which makes these demands, and she has a right to make them. She has God's work to do, His cause to defend; and in such a cause she can afford to take a high stand and to speak boldly. Yet she condescends, as God Himself does, and she speaks invitingly and affectionately as He does. And as our good God, great and powerful as He is, the Creator and the future Judge of the world, even begs of a soul not to turn

away from Him, but to be just towards Him, in making a return which He has a right to expect, so does the Church, doing the work of God, represent the spirit and use the words and arguments of God, and beg you not to turn away, when it so deeply concerns you to accept the invitation she holds out to you. The Council is a fact; it is an argument; it is an evidence; nay, more, its very existence is to you a light and a grace, and it will have to be answered for. Do not resist its influence, but acknowledge it, and bow before a reality which you cannot help admitting.

And now, O Lord, Almighty, I may say, in the beautiful words of the Prophet Baruch, O God of Israel, the soul in anguish, and the troubled spirit crieth to Thee. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy, for Thou art a merciful God, and have pity upon us, for we have sinned before Thee. . . . Remember not the iniquities of our fathers, but think upon Thy Hand, and upon Thy Name. Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life: give ear that thou mayest learn wisdom. Thou hast forsaken the fountain of wisdom; for if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou hadst surely dwelt in peace for ever. Learn where is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding, that thou mayest know also where is length of days and life, where is the light of the eyes and peace. These are blessings which are within your reach, offered to you by God through His Church, and offered by the Church through the Council. Take them, and make them your own. And even if it be the case with others, that they will not hear and obey the voice which calls them, let it not be the case with you. But when He that has made you because He loved you, and who always will have you bound to Him by a law of love, asks

you, pointing to those who reject His Grace and His call: Will you also leave Me? you will answer with all the earnestness, sincerity and fervour of St. Peter: *Lord, to whom shall we go?* THOU HAST THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

From the *Times* of November 16th, 1869.

The following is a translation of a most important letter addressed by the Patriarch of Constantinople to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in reply to one written by His Grace to His Holiness, forwarding (as would appear) a copy of the English Prayer Book.

The Patriarch's letter is dated September 26 (October 8, new style), and was published in the Constantinople newspaper *Neologos*, on October 11 (23rd) :—

“ Gregory, by the mercy of God, Archbishop of Constantinople, the new Rome, and Œcumenical Patriarch, to the Most Holy Archbishop the Metropolitan of Canterbury, and Exarch of the Christians of the Anglican Confession in Great Britain, the Lord Archibald Campbell: Peace from God and brotherly salutation in Christ.

“ Having received, with the greatest joy, the highly esteemed letter sent by your Venerable Sanctity to our humility, we were moved to the inmost heart, as was meet, both at the thanks you so kindly expressed to us for the fulfilment of what was at once a Christian and canonical duty, in sending our Protocyncellus to the consecration performed by the most beloved of God, the Bishop of Gibraltar, the Lord Charles Amyand, and also at the communication, in a spirit of brotherly love, of your desire and prayers that there may be upon earth one elect flock and one Chief Shepherd—our Lord, uniting those that are divided, and guiding all, so that they may think and speak the same thing, and work together for the increase of His kingdom.

“ We also, night and day, praying our God and Saviour for these very things, do not cease, on every occasion, both to rejoice and, so far as we can, to co-operate readily in every good work and every good design tending to the edification and perfection of our neighbour, and to the enlightenment and common agreement of all, and to the unity that is in Christ Jesus. Nor do

we only pray for this; but we also expect and anticipate it from the common Father, and from God the Saviour and His Spirit, when many shall be taught, and the knowledge of the most ancient and unadulterated orthodoxy shall be extended which the primitive and Catholic Church of Christ delivered to us, free from error, through the Apostolic heralds of God, and the God-bearing Father, and the seven venerable and God-moved Œcumenical Councils.

“ But, as to the burial of your countrymen, be it known to your much-desired Holiness that, even if we had not been expressly exhorted and requested by any of the venerable British Bishops, we would of ourselves have granted every permission to bury English strangers deceased within our cemeteries, at the request of their relatives; well knowing that ‘the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.’ This, then, we will much rather permit for the future, from consideration to your Holiness, beloved of Christ, and in recompense, as is meet, of the tribute of brotherly kindness, on the sole condition that no private right of property is in any case acquired in the ground in which they are buried.

“ Having very gratefully received the Sacred Prayer Book of your Anglican Confession, presented to us by you, we have deferred an answer chiefly on this account, that, having more leisurely perused this Ecclesiastical Book, we might more accurately ascertain how far it inclines to or diverges from genuine Evangelical and Catholic teaching; and how far it confirms that statement of the Preface (p. 7) that ‘it contains nothing contrary to the Word of God and to sound doctrine.’

“ In the meantime, having gladly received the Encyclical Epistle published by the Anglican Bishops assembled two years since in England, to which is prefixed the commendatory letter of your ever-to-be-remembered Eminence, and perceiving from it that they distinctly confess and affirm, simply and in general, that they hold firmly and immoveably the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, and that they maintain the Creeds of one Holy and Apostolic Church, and keep pure and undefiled its ancient order and worship . . . and reject all novelty, and are endeavouring to publish abroad in all the earth the saving preaching of the Gospel,—perceiving, we say, all this so distinctly and generally affirmed in words, we rejoiced greatly in our soul, suspecting the approach and dawn of the gathering together in one and the same fold of the Lord, and the union of all the spiritual sheep everywhere.

“ But on descending to the particulars of the contents of the Prayer Book, and of the distinguished Confession of the Thirty-nine Articles contained in it,—since in the perusal of them, both the statements concerning the eternal existence of the Holy Spirit and those concerning the Divine Eucharist, and, further, those concerning the number of the Sacraments,

concerning Apostolical and Ecclesiastical Tradition, the authority of the truly genuine Œcumenical Councils, the position and mutual relations of the Church on earth and that in Heaven ; and, moreover, the honour and reverence due from us to those who are, in theory and practice, the heroes of the Faith—the adamantine martyrs and athletes—since, we say, these statements appeared to us to savour too much of novelty ; and that which is said (p. 592, Art. 19), ‘As the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith,’ deprives the Eastern Churches of the orthodoxy and perfection of the Faith (let us be permitted to say that accusations of our neighbour are out of place in a distinguished Confession of Faith)—these statements throw us into suspense, so that we doubt what we are to judge of the rule of Anglican orthodoxy. We would, therefore, pray with our whole soul to the Author and Finisher of our salvation, to enlighten the understanding of all with the light of His knowledge, and to make of all nations one speech of the one Faith, and of the one love, and of the one hope of the Gospel ; that with one mouth and one heart, as merciful children of one and the same mother, the Church—the Catholic Church of the first-begotten—we may glorify the Triune God.

“May His saving grace be with your Holiness, dearly beloved to us in Christ, and with all the God-beloved flock subject to you.

“September 26, 1869.”

NOTE B.

PROTESTANT ADDRESS TO THE POPE.

HOLY FATHER,—

Having long been endeavouring in vain to obtain from the Prelates and Ecclesiastics of the several communions to which we belong either a resistance to, or a condemnation of, acts, practices, and maxims, contrary alike to the Word of God and the laws of man, we now approach your Holiness in the hope that this branch of public disorder will not be neglected by your solicitude, and that in taking the measures which you propose for the rectification of the public judgment you will include those particular errors which we now submit.

The ancient relations of conquest and administration, which have connected the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland with regions beyond the limits of

Europe, inhabited by Brahmins, Hindus, Mussulmans, and Pagans, have exposed in these distant countries the integrity of Englishmen to more than ordinary temptation. Treaties have there been violated, blood has been unjustly shed, and injuries of various kinds have been inflicted upon innocent persons. To justify these evil deeds, a maxim has been introduced and even publicly proclaimed by the highest political authority of modern times, Sir Robert Peel, that Christian men are not bound by the law of nations and the dictates of justice in their dealings with those who are un-Christian and uncivilised.

In the execution of the deeds which have been covered by such a maxim, and in the future prosecution of the like to which it invites, the spiritual subjects of your Holiness have been, and will be, extensively employed.

We have ascertained that the Fathers of the Catholic Church, the Popes, and the Councils, have repeatedly and authoritatively condemned and denounced such practices and such maxims as contrary to the Will of God and to the laws of men, and as rendering all those who execute and abet the like, cut off from the Communion of Christian men.

Considering that no State, however powerful, can be safe wherein such practices prevail, considering that no man, however individually pious, can be other than an infidel who does not in such a matter discriminate between right and wrong; considering that all the religious bodies of Christendom have ceased, in this respect, to teach the Law of God; we appeal to your Holiness to declare anew, whether by your own authority or by means of the Council about to be held, that law and those maxims which were declared and enforced of old from the very seat on which your Holiness now sits, in order that those may become a guide for the conduct of our fellow-countrymen who belong to the Church of which your Holiness is the Head, and a light to the whole world.

We have learned that your Holiness has refused absolution and religious offices to those, being impenitent, who have, by a pretended act of their own will, repudiated the duties of allegiance to our Sovereign, and who hold themselves guilty of no crime when committing unlawful acts in obeying the orders of those to whom they have sworn a blind obedience.

Considering that the acts and purposes of these misguided men amount to no more and no other than that which constitutes the daily practice of all the Governments of Europe, namely, that of taking the life of man without due cause, and without judicial warrant; considering that it is by the effects and by the example of such acts on the part of Governments who raise men either voluntarily or by force, who discipline these men in the arts of war, who pay them from the sweat and labour of the people, and who hold three millions of such men, who are bound to a blind obedience, ready at every hour to devastate and destroy, that those private and insignificant persons have been

disturbed in their daily life and tempted into evil courses, to whom your Holiness now refuses, because of such acts, the offices of religion :

We pray and beseech your Holiness to deal in like manner with the same sin in those who, at the present moment, are controlled by no tribunal, and liable to no retribution.

NOTE C.

Letter from the Holy Father to the Archbishop of Westminster, concerning those who are without the Catholic Church.

“PIUS P.P. IX.

“To our Venerable Brother, Henry Edward, Archbishop of Westminster.

“VENERABLE BROTHER,—

Health and the Apostolic Blessing. Having said in the the letter which we addressed to you, Venerable Brother, on the fourth day of September last, that subjects which had already been carefully examined and decided by an Œcumenical Council could not again be called in question, that therefore no place could be given in the approaching Council for any defence of errors which had been condemned, and that for this reason we could not have invited non-Catholics to a discussion, we now learn that some of those who dissent from our faith have so understood those words as to believe that no way is left open to them of making known the difficulties which keep them separated from the Catholic Church, and that almost all approach to us is cut off. But so far are we, the Vicar upon earth, although unworthy, of Him who came to save that which was lost, from repelling them in any way whatever that we even go forth to meet them, and nothing do we seek for with a more ardent wish than to be able to stretch out our arms with a father's love to any one who shall return to us. And never, certainly, have we wished to impose silence upon those who, misled by their education, and believing their opinions to be right, think that their dissent from us rests upon strong arguments which they would wish to be examined by wise and prudent men. For although this cannot be done in the Council, there will not be wanting learned divines, appointed by ourselves, to whom they may open their minds, and may with confidence make known the reasons of their own belief; so that even out of the contest of a discussion undertaken solely with a desire of finding out the truth, they may receive a more abundant light to guide them to it. And may very many propose this to themselves, and carry

it out in good faith! For it could not be done without great profit to themselves and to others; to themselves, indeed, because God will show His face to those that seek Him with their whole heart, and will give them what they long for; to others, because not only the example of eminent men cannot fail of its efficacy, but also the more diligently they shall have laboured to obtain the benefit of truth, the more earnestly will they strive to impart the same benefit to the rest. Earnestly praying the God of Mercy for this most happy issue, we desire you to receive, Venerable Brother, the Apostolic Blessing which, as a token of the Divine favour and of our own especial goodwill, we most lovingly grant to you and to your whole diocese.

“ Given at St. Peter's, in Rome, on the 30th day of October, 1869, in the twenty-fourth year of our Pontificate,

“ Pius, P.P. IX.”

FINIS.

140



